

REVELATION

1:1 *What does the word "revelation" signify?*

The word *revelation* is derived from the Greek word **apokalupsis**, from which we also get the word *apocalypse*. This is why the book of Revelation is sometimes called *The Apocalypse*. **Apokalupsis** includes not only the thing shown and seen but the interpretation, the unveiling of the same. The book of Revelation in its entirety is prophetic (CP V3; 19:10; 22:7, 10, 18-19). The purpose of the book of Revelation is to make known to believers, in both symbolic and literal form, Christ's second coming and the final judgments of God upon the earth and all its inhabitants. God gave the revelation to Jesus, who sent it with an angel to John to give to the church (CP 1:1-2, 4-5; 22:6). The angel was not an angel of God in the literal sense, but a man. We do not know who the man was other than that he was a redeemed saint (CP 19:10; 22:8-9, 16).

Revelation is the only book in the bible which has a promised blessing attached for all who read, who hear, and who obey its teachings (CP 1:3; 22:7).

1:4 *(A) What is the significance of the seven churches in Asia John addresses here?*

The significance of these churches is that while they were actual churches which existed at that time, they are also representative of all churches in all ages (CP V11 with 2:1-7; 2:8-11; 2:12-17; 2:18-29; 3:1-6; 3:7-13; 3:14-22). The spiritual condition of these churches is representative of the spiritual condition of all local churches down through the ages. These letters are to be interpreted as not only applying for that generation, but as having an ongoing application for all generations, including ours. Their relevance for today is what they reveal about how churches can stagnate spiritually, fall into error, accept false teaching, tolerate immorality, idolatry and heresies, lose their zeal for God and adapt to the anti-God elements of the corrupt world system. They are not hearing what the spirit is saying to them. But churches are people – individual Christians formed into a body – and God holds them individually responsible for their own salvation (CP Mt 6:19-20; Lu 13:23-27; Jn 6:27; Php 2:12-13; 1Ti 6:17-19; 2Pe 1:5-11; Jude 1:3).

The letters to the seven churches is a warning to every individual Christian which they must heed in order to be saved. They must continually examine their beliefs and activities and ensure that they conform to what Christ expects of His church (CP 1Cor 9:24-27; 10:12; 11:27-29; 2Cor 13:5). Jesus has undertaken to only save those individuals who repent and overcome the evil in their midst (CP Rev 2:5, 7). Jesus is addressing the church at Ephesus here (CP 3:16-17). Here it is the church at Pergamos (CP 2:22, 25-26). Here the church at Thyatira (CP 3:3-5). Here the church at Sardis (CP 3:18-21). Finally, the church at Laodicea. The church at Smyrna does not have to repent of anything; they only have to remain faithful (CP 2:10-11). And the church at Philadelphia only has to "hold fast to that which they have" (CP 3:11-12). We should note here also that the church at

Philadelphia is the only church that will escape the great tribulation (CP 3:10-11). The word *from* here means **out of**. This clearly proves a pre-tribulation "rapture" of the church. It will not go through any part of the tribulation period whatsoever. Those who belong to this church will be kept out of the tribulation completely (For a more detailed study on the church at Philadelphia see comments on Jn 13:34-35, 1 Jn 2:7, Rev 3:7-13. For more detailed studies on the churches at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea see comments on Rev 2:1-7, 2:8-11, 2:12-17, 2:18-29, 3:1-6 and 3:14-22).

(B) What do the seven spirits here represent?

(CP also 3:1; 4:5; 5:6). Most bible commentators agree that the word *seven* in those scriptures denotes spiritual perfection and completeness. The seven spirits represent the fullness of the spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus (CP Isa 11:1-2; 42:1-4; 48:16; 61:1-3 with Mt 3:16; Jn 3:34; Ac 10:38; Col 2:9).

1:5 *What does "first begotten of the dead" mean?*

This refers to the resurrection. Jesus was the first person raised up from the dead (CP Ac 2:22-27; 26:23; Ro 8:29; 1Cor 15:20-23; Col 1:18; 1Pe 1:3). Being the first person ever to rise from the dead to die no more gives Jesus pre-eminence among all the saints of God who will also be raised up to eternal life in due course. That is why He is called the "first begotten from the dead". Christ's resurrection guarantees the future resurrection of everyone who has died believing in Him (CP Jn 14:19 with 1Cor 15:51-58; 1Th 4:13-18).

1:7 *How are we to understand what John says here?*

John is referring to Christ's second coming here which is the main theme of Revelation. This is when Jesus comes back to earth at the end of the great tribulation to defeat Antichrist and his armies at the battle of Armageddon (CP Isa 63:1-6; Dan 7:13-14; Joel 3:1-21; Zech 12:4-9; 14:1-5; Mt 24:29-44; 2Th 1:7-9; Jude 14:15; Rev 19:11-21). "...every eye shall see Him" in Rev 1:7 means that Christ's second coming will be witnessed by the whole world (CP Zech 12:10; Mt 24:27, 29-30; Mk 13:24-26; Lu 21:25-28; Ac 1:9-11). "... and they also which pierced Him" refers to the Jews. They were responsible for Christ's crucifixion. Jews living at this time will be filled with consternation at His coming (CP Zech 12:10; Mt 27:17-25; Jn 19:37; Ac 2:22-23; 3:12-15). "... and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him" means that all the peoples of the earth will be plunged into mourning because Christ comes to judge His enemies and set up His millennial kingdom. They fear punishment because of their sins (CP Gen 3:8-10; Mt 25:31-46; Rev 6:15-17; 11:18).

1:8 *What is the significance of the words "Alpha and Omega" here?*

Alpha and Omega also means the beginning and the end (CP V11, 17; 2:8; 3:14; 21:6; 22:13). *Alpha*

signifies that Jesus is the one who brought all things into existence (CP Jn 1:3; Ro 11:36; Eph 1:10; He 1:8-10; Rev 3:14; 4:11). *Omega* signifies that Jesus is the one who will bring all things to their determined end (CP Psa 102:25-27; Isa 51:6; He 1:10-12; 2Pe 3:10-13; Rev 22:13). The fact that the expression Alpha and Omega is applied to Christ is another proof of His deity and equality with the Father (CP Jn 1:1-2; 8:56-58; 17:5; Php 2:5-8; 1Ti 3:16; 1Jn 1:1-2). See also comments on Mt 1:18-21, 3:16-17; Lu 1:35(B); Jn 1:1, 5:16-23, 12:41; Ac 13:33, 20:28; Php 2:5-8; Col 2:9; 1Ti 3:16; He 1:5, 5:5; 1Jn 5:6-9.

1:11 See comments on 1:4(A), 1:8 and 3:7-13

1:19 How are we to understand what Jesus says here?

What Jesus says here provides a simple outline for the entire book of Revelation. *The things which thou hast seen* refers to the vision of Jesus John had just received (CP V10-18). John saw the glorified Jesus here as present in the world in the church, "... in the midst of the seven candlesticks". The seven candlesticks represent the seven churches in Asia which, as we learned in our study on V4, are representative of all churches in all ages. The seven stars Jesus held in His right hand represent the leaders of the churches (CP V20). In V10-18 the glorified Jesus appeared to John clothed in robes of kingly power. He surpassed the sun in His glory. The two-edged sword in His mouth in V 16 represents the word of God which either cuts away sin from the churches and individual members, or it cuts the churches and individual members away from the eternal kingdom in judgment (CP 2:12 with Jn 12:48; He 4:12-13; 1Pe 4:5). The purpose of John's vision of Jesus in Rev 1 is to give comfort and assurance of victory to the church. It is not to confirm their fears or threats of the enemy.

The things which are refer to the church age which Jesus addresses in Ch 2-3. They concern the spiritual state of the churches and the eventual "rapture" of those individuals still living prior to the great tribulation who are represented by the church at Philadelphia (CP Rev 3:7-13). As we learned in our study on Rev 1:4, the word *from* in 3:10 means "out of". Jesus is going to save those represented by the church at Philadelphia **out of** the great tribulation. The tribulation is God's wrath poured out upon sinners, not saints (CP Ro 5:8-9; Eph 5:6; 1Th 1:9-10; 5:2-9; 2Pe 2:9). These scriptures all prove that the church will be raptured to heaven before the onset of the great tribulation, and this is further confirmed in Rev 4:1 (CP 4:1). *The things which must be hereafter*, literally means the things which are logically necessary to fulfill God's purposes (CP Mt 16:21; 25:27; 26:54; Lu 15:32; Jn 3:7, 14, 30; 4:4, 24; 10:16). This means that the things which must be hereafter are predestined to begin **after** Ch 2-3 - the church age - is fulfilled, not at the same time. This is clear evidence of a pre-tribulation "rapture". The "rapture" ends the church age (CP Jn 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:51-58; 1Th 4:13-18). The church is never mentioned again as being on earth after Rev 3 because it is in heaven (CP 4:4, 9-11;

5:8-10, 19:1-4). The four and twenty elders here represent the raptured church in heaven. They identified themselves in Rev 5:9 as the church, redeemed to God from out of every tribe, language, people, and nation in the earth (CP Rev 5:9). The saints who are saved after Rev 4:1 come out of the great tribulation. They are not the church as so many Christians believe (CP Mt 24:9; Rev 6:9-11; 7:9-14; 17:6). The tribulation saints are beheaded for their witness to Christ; they would not take the mark of the beast nor worship him (CP 13:7-8, 15-17; 14:13; 15:2-4; 20:4).

The things which shall be hereafter refers to the events that will come upon the earth **after** the "rapture" of the church. These things are all described in Rev Ch 4-22. They include the revelation of Antichrist; the great tribulation; Christ's second coming; the battle of Armageddon and the defeat of both Antichrist and the devil; the judgment of the nations; Christ's millennial reign; the great white throne judgment; the final judgment of Satan and all the unrighteous; the creation of a new heaven and earth, and New Jerusalem coming down from heaven to earth to be the seat of government, from which both God and Christ will rule throughout eternity (see also comments on Lu 21:36, Jn 14:1-3, 1Cor 15:51-58, Php 3:20-21, 1Th 4:13-18, 5:1-11, 2Th 2:1-3, 2:6-8, 2Ti 2:18, Rev 3:7-13).

2:1-7 What do we learn here from the church at Ephesus?

We learn here that doctrinal and moral purity, zeal for the truth, and disciplined service is no substitute for the love for Christ which the church at Ephesus had forsaken. Jesus warned the church to repent otherwise He would remove it from its place in the kingdom of God "... else I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of His place, except thou repent." Only those who repent and overcome will eat of the tree of life. This admonition is for us too.

Ephesus is the first of seven local churches in Asia Jesus addresses in Ch 2-3. His purpose in writing to the churches is to reveal their spiritual condition and outline the future events that will come upon the earth preceding, and subsequent to Christ's second coming (CP 1:4, 11, 19). The letters to the seven churches in Asia is a warning to both the corporate church and to every individual Christian, which they must heed in order to be saved. Christians must continually examine their beliefs and activities, and ensure that they conform to what Christ expects of His church (CP 1Cor 9:24-27; 10:12; 11:27-29; 2Cor 13:5). While the seven churches in Asia were actual churches that existed in John's day, they are also representative of all churches in all ages. Christ's letters to them are to be interpreted as not only applying to that generation, but as having an ongoing application for all generations, including ours. What Jesus said to them applies to us too.

In closing, it should be noted here that it is not known who the Nicolaitans are in Rev 2:6. A great many Christians believe they were a heretical sect who compromised with the culture of the day and promoted immorality and idolatry. They were also

prominent in the church at Pergamos together with Balaam (CP 2:14-15). Others however, believe that the word *Nicolaitans*, because it means "to rule over the laity, or people", is a symbolic reference to the rise of the "clergy system" in the church, which designates paid, professional full-time ministers or priests, as opposed to the rest of the church - the *laity*. This implies a system with grades of status or authority ranking one above another in the New Testament church, which is hierarchical, and totally unscriptural. However, it is more likely that doctrinal error is in view in Rev 2:6 rather than a hierarchical church system. Nicolaitans are still in the church today, professing to love Christ but compromising God's word with the corrupt world system. (For a more detailed study on New Testament church government see comments on Ac 11:27, 20:17, Ro 11:13, 16:1-2, Eph 4:11-12, 1 Ti 3:1-7, 3:8-13, 1 Pe 5:1-3).

2:8-11 ***What do we learn here from the church at Smyrna?***

We learn from this that Christians are called to suffer persecutions for Christ's sake and that those who endure to the end will receive a crown of life - the reward of everlasting life with Jesus (CP Mk 10:29-30; 13:13; Jn 16:33; Ro 5:3-5; 2Ti 3:12; Jas 1:1-4; 1Pe 4:12-13 with 2Ti 4:8; Jas 1:12; 1Pe 5:4). It does not matter what a Christian's financial status is, it matters that they remain steadfast in the faith, and faithful to God's word. If they do this, though they may be poor in material possessions, they will be spiritually rich in Christ, and that is all that matters (CP Lu 12:15-16, 22-32). *Ye shall have tribulation ten days* (Rev 2:10), symbolizes the relatively short time the Christians in Smyrna would spend in prison for their faith - it does not refer to the great tribulation, as many think. The *second death* (2:11), is a reference to the eternal damnation of sinners in the lake of fire handed down at the great white throne judgment (CP Rev 20:11-15; 21:8).

2:12-17 ***What do we learn here from the church at Pergamos?***

We learn from this that, although we may still believe in Jesus and not deny our faith in spite of persecution, any compromise with teaching that promotes idolatry and immorality - the doctrine of Balaam - means that we will forfeit our place in God's eternal kingdom. The two-edged sword in V12 symbolizes God's word which either cuts away sin from churches and individual members, or it cuts churches and individual members away from the eternal kingdom in judgment (CP 1:16 with Jn 12:48; He 4:12-13). Balaam was a prophet in the Old Testament who sold his services to the king of Moab - Balak - and counseled him to lure the Israelites into sexual immorality with the Moabite women, in defiance of God (CP Nu 22:1-12; 25:1-2; 31:16).

As noted in our study on Rev 2:1-7 it is not known who the Nicolaitans are, but they obviously promoted idolatry and immorality like Balaam, and compromised with the culture of the day in Pergamos, as they did in Ephesus (CP 2:1, 6). Nicolaitans are still in the church today. They profess to love Christ but compromise God's word with the corrupt world

system. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna* (in V17), refers to the spiritual nourishment the bread of life - Jesus - will provide for overcomers (CP Jn 6:31-35, 47-51, 58). It is unclear what the white stones are (also in V17), or exactly what the name on each stone will be, but they are highly significant because they are the evidence that one has been accepted by God and declared worthy to receive eternal life. The *new name* written on the stone will be the new name God gives to each individual saved.

2:18-29 ***What do we learn here from the church at Thyatira?***

We learn here that although we may abound to good works, love, service, faith, and patient endurance, it will count for nothing with Jesus if we compromise God's word in any way and engage in heathen practices. The word *fornication* is used here metaphorically of the association of heathen practices with professed Christianity. This is a form of speech common in the Old Testament. It refers to the unfaithfulness of the Jews toward God under the figure of Israel being God's wife (CP Jer 3:6-10, 14; Eze 16:15, 22-26; Hos 2:2-5; 4:12). Any unfaithfulness toward God equates with sexual immorality and unfaithfulness to one's spouse. Friendship with the world and participating in worldly pursuits is spiritual fornication (CP Jas 4:4; 1Jn 2:15-17 with Rev 14:8; 17:1-4; 18:1-3; 19:2). *That woman Jezebel* in Rev 2:20, symbolizes the seduction of Christians from the truth by false teachers in the church down through the ages. *Eating meat sacrificed to idols* violates the principle of strong Christians being sensitive to weaker Christian's needs. This symbolizes Christians being more concerned about their own self-indulgent pleasures and pursuits than the needs and concerns of fellow-Christians (CP Ro 14:1-2, 13-15, 21; 1Cor 6:12; 8:4-13; 10:13-24). *The morning star* in Rev 2:28 is a reference to Christ Himself (CP 2Pe 1:19; Rev 22:16). Jesus Himself is the ultimate reward for overcomers. They will rule and reign with Him throughout eternity (CP Rev 2:26-28).

3:1-6 ***What do we learn from the church at Sardis?***

We learn here that good works are not always a true indication of the purity of one's heart, and that Christians can never take their salvation or their faith for granted (CP Mt 6:19-20; Jn 6:27; 1Cor 10:12; 2 or 13:5; Php 2:12-13; 1Ti 6:17-19; 2Pe 1:10-11; Jude 1:3). No one can ever lay claim to the name of Jesus without reckoning with Him for every dereliction of duty (CP Mt 7:21-27; 24:42-44; 25:13-30; Rev 16:15). Christians should never be lulled into a false sense of security because of a good reputation. "... *I will not blot his name from the book of life,*" is clear evidence that every member of the human race already has their name written in the book of life, but it is whether their names stay written in the book that counts in eternity. Only the names of those who conform to God's plan of redemption remain in the book; the rest are blotted out (CP Ps 139:13-16; Dan 12:1; Php 4:3 with Ex 32:31-34; Ps 69:28; 109:13; Rev 17:8; 20:12-15; 21:27; 22:18-19). We

learn from these scriptures that everyone's name is written in the book of life from their mother's womb. They are only blotted out when men sin and incur the death penalty. Knowing that our names are already in the book of life should be incentive enough to continually examine ourselves and ensure that we keep them there.

3:7-13 *What do we learn here from the church at Philadelphia?*

Of the seven churches in Asia Jesus addresses in Rev 2-3, the church at Philadelphia is the only church He promises to save from the great tribulation, "... because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." As we learned in our study on Rev 1:19, the word *from* here means "out of". This means that Jesus is going to save everyone who belongs to the church at Philadelphia, **out of** the great tribulation. This is further evidence of a pre-tribulation rapture, which is taught throughout scripture (CP Lu 21:36). This is the first allusion to the rapture in scripture. Here Jesus tells His listeners that there is a way to escape the horrendous events of the great tribulation He was describing in Lu 21, and that is to be "accounted worthy". Those who the church at Philadelphia represents, are accounted worthy (CP 1Th 1:6-10). What Paul says here is essentially the same as what Jesus said in Lu 21:36. The tribulation is God's wrath poured out upon sinners, not saints (CP Ro 5:8-9; Eph 5:1-6; 1Th 1:10; 5:2-11; 2Pe 2:9).

These scriptures all teach that Jesus is coming back for those who belong to Him **before** God's wrath is poured out upon the earth, not at the same time as, or afterwards, as so many in the church believe. This is also proved by what Jesus said in Rev 1:19, "... write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." *The things which shall be hereafter*, cannot begin until the things which are have been fulfilled. *The things which are* concern the church age are addressed in Rev 2-3. *The things which shall be hereafter* have been predestined to take place after the church age and are addressed in Ch 4-22. The church is never mentioned again in scripture as being on earth after Rev 3. It has been raptured, and is represented by the twenty-four elders in heaven (CP 4:4, 9-11; 5:8-10; 19:1-4). The twenty-four elders in these scriptures represent the raptured church in heaven. They identified themselves in Rev 5:9 as the church, redeemed to God from out of every tribe, language, people, and nation in the earth (CP Rev 5:9). *The things which shall be hereafter* include the revelation of Antichrist; the great tribulation; Christ's second coming; the battle of Armageddon and the defeat of both Antichrist and the devil; the judgment of the nations; Christ's millennial reign; the great white throne judgment; the final judgment of Satan and all the unrighteous, the creation of a new heaven and earth, and the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from heaven to earth to be the seat of government, from which both God and Christ will rule throughout eternity. None of these things can begin until the church age in Ch 2-3 is fulfilled. The saints who are saved after Rev 3 come out of the great tribulation -

they are not the church, as so many believe (CP Mt 24:9; Rev 6:9-11; 7:9-14; 17:6). They were beheaded for their witness to Christ; they would not take the mark of the beast, nor worship him (CP 13:7-8, 15-17; 14:13; 15:2-4; 20:4).

It is highly significant that the only Christians who qualify for the rapture belong to the Philadelphia church. *Philadelphia* means brotherly love; the love of brethren; love for the brethren. The New Testament stresses how Christians are to love one another, because it is only their love for each other that proves Christians' love for God, perfects His love in them, and assures them of their place in His eternal kingdom (CP 1Jn 2:10; 3:14; 4:7-21; 5:1-2). The effectiveness of God's love in Christians demonstrates itself in their love for the brethren. This is the "perfect love that casts out fear" in 1Jn 4:18. This fear is the fear of being eternally damned. Christians in whom God's love is perfected do not have this fear - they have passed from death to life, because of their love for each other, as we learned in 1Jn 3:14, "... we know that we have passed from death into life, because we love the brethren." This clearly teaches that it is only Christians' love for one another that ensures their place in God's eternal kingdom. We need to heed what these scriptures teach because they all emphasize the love Christians are to have for each other as the key to eternal life (CP Mt 22:36-40; Jn 13:34-35; Ro 12:9-10; 13:8-10; 1Cor 13:1-7; 1Pe 1:22). See also comments on Jn 13:34-35; Ro 13:8; 1Cor 12:31; Ga 5:1-8, 5:13; 1Th 3:12; 1Jn 2:7, 3:15, 3:16-18, 3:19-22, 4:7-21.

Not everyone who calls Jesus Lord, will be saved (CP Psa 119:9; Pr 4:4; Mt 7:21-27; Lu 13:23-27; Ro 2:13; Jas 1:22-25; Rev 1:3; 3:14-16). Jesus has promised to save only those who have repented and overcome the evil in their midst, persevered in faith in the face of intense persecution, and love their brothers and sisters in Christ, regardless of where they fellowship. They have fulfilled the New Testament law of love and are assured of their place in God's eternal kingdom (CP Mt 22:39-40; Ro 13:8-10). See also comments on Lu 21:36, Jn 5:28-29, 14:1-3, 1Cor 15:51-58, Php 3:20-21, 1Th 4:13-18, 5:1-11, 2Th 2:1-3, 2:6-8, Rev 1:19.

3:14-22 *What do we learn here from the church at Laodicea?*

We learn here that there are no such things in God's economy as nominal Christians (CP Mt 7:21-27; 12:30; Lu 13:23-27; Ro 2:13; Jas 1:22-25). The Laodicean church is representative of nominal Christians whose lives revolve around luxury living and accumulating material wealth and possessions, while around them souls are dying, in need of the gospel. Laodicean Christians are indifferent to spiritual things. They love everything the world loves: sports, television, movies - all forms of self-gratifying pleasures. Their church programmes are packaged to accommodate the culture of the world more than for worshipping Jesus. In fact, Jesus is so shut out of Laodicean Christians' lives that He has had to issue an invitation for them to fellowship with Him, "... behold I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to

him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." (Rev 3:2) The irony of this scripture is that Christians use it to lead sinners to get saved, when in fact it is addressed to Christians who need saving, themselves (CP Lu 12:35-40; Jn 14:23; 2Cor 6:14-18). Laodicean Christians see themselves as rich, increased with goods, and needing nothing, but Jesus sees them as poor, blind, wretched, miserable and naked. He counsels them not to lay up treasures for themselves on earth, but to store it up for themselves in heaven (CP Job 31:13-28). What Job says here should be the testimony of every born again believer, because one day, like Job, we will all have to give an account to God for everything we lavish on ourselves, and withhold from others. This completes John's revelation of the *things which are* that concerns the church. After this, the church is raptured to heaven. From Rev 4:1 onwards it is never again mentioned in scripture as being on earth, but is represented by the "four and twenty elders" in heaven (CP Rev 4:1-4; 5:8-10; 19:1-4).

4:1-4 *See comments on Rev 1:19 and 3:7-13.*

4:6-11 *What do the four beasts here (KJV) represent?*

Beasts here (KJV), should have been translated "living creatures", as in most modern bibles. Scripture is silent as to what these living creatures actually represent, but it is clear that they have been created specifically to worship and glorify God (CP V8; 5:8-10, 14; 19:4). The living creatures are undoubtedly the Seraphim and Cherubim described in Isa 6 and Eze 1 and 10 in the Old Testament (CP Isa 6:1-3; Eze 1:5, 10; 10:14-15, 19-22). The point of Rev 4 is summed up in V11 (CP V11).

5:1-7 *What is the significance of what John saw here?*

As the lamb of God who gave Himself to die on the cross to redeem fallen man to God, Jesus is the only one qualified to loose the seals and open the book (CP V8-10 with Ac 20:28; Ro 3:21-25; Eph 1:3-7; 2:12-13; Col 1:12-14, 20-22; He 13:12; 1Pe 1:2, 18-19). The book with seven seals is a book of judgments and only Jesus can execute the judgments (CP Jn 5:22-27). Jesus will loose the judgments upon all who rejected His sacrificial death (CP Rev 6:12-17). This forms part of the great tribulation and is clear evidence that the tribulation is God's wrath poured out upon sinners, not saints. As we learned in our study on Rev 3:7-13, saints will not go through the tribulation - Jesus has promised to save them (CP Rev 3:10). The seven spirits of God referred to in 5:6 reminds us that Jesus was endued with the fullness of the spirit during His earthly ministry (CP 5:6 with Isa 11:1-2; 42:1-4; 48:16; 61:1-3; Mt 3:16; Jn 3:34; Ac 10:38; Col 2:9; Rev 1:4).

5:8-10 *See comments on Rev 1:19*

6:1-2 *Who is the rider on the white horse here?*

Many in the church think that the rider on the white horse here is Jesus, but that is not correct because Jesus is opening the seals; He would not be the contents of the seals and open them as well. Furthermore, Jesus is symbolized here by a lamb, not a horseman (CP 5:1-9). The rider on the white horse is Antichrist. The opening of the first seal and the revelation of the rider on the white horse are synonymous with the first half of Daniel's seventieth week prophesied in the Old Testament. The seventieth week of Daniel represents the last seven years of this age when Antichrist is revealed and the tribulation comes upon the earth. Antichrist rises up at the start of this period and enters into a seven year peace treaty with Israel which he breaks after three and a half years, and then makes war himself with Israel (CP Dan 7:7-8, 20-21, 24-25; 8:8-13, 23-25; 11:36-45 with 9:24-27; Rev 12:13-17). These scriptures symbolize the emergence of Antichrist at the start of Daniel's seventieth week as the little horn among the other ten horns. He rises to power as the eleventh king among the other ten kings through the empowering of Satan, "... and his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and holy people" (CP Dan 8:24 with 2Th 2:8-9; Rev 13:1-8). Antichrist is the one who it was prophesied would go forth "conquering and to conquer" in Rev 6:2, not Christ.

The white horse of Rev 6:2 is not to be confused with the white horse of 19:11. The horse in 6:2 is only symbolic whereas the horse in 19:11 is literal. Christ is the rider on the white horse in 19:11, but until then He is symbolized by a lamb (CP Rev 19:11-13). There are no scriptures whatever to corroborate any teaching that Christ is symbolized by the rider on the white horse in Rev 6:2 who went forth "conquering and to conquer". Antichrist was given a crown because he had brought peace and prosperity to the earth. He has a bow but no arrows, which depicts him as a benevolent dictator. We know he brought peace to the earth in V2 because in V4 after the opening of the second seal, he is given power to take it away (CP Rev 6:3-4). As we saw previously, this power comes from Satan. The opening of the second seal in Rev 6:3 and the revelation of the rider on the red horse and the events that followed in V4 signalled the onset of the great tribulation in the middle of Antichrist's reign. This is synonymous with the second half of Daniel's seventieth week (CP Dan 7:25; 9:27; 11:36-39; 12:1; Mt 24:6-7, 15-22). We learn from all this that the tribulation will occupy the last three and a half years of Antichrist's seven year reign. For the first three and a half years he is a benevolent dictator, not yet the enemy of God. He becomes God's enemy at the end of the first three and a half years when he breaks his peace treaty with Israel and sets up the "abomination of desolation" in the temple (CP Dan 9:27; 11:31, 36-37; 12:11; Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14). *Abomination of desolation* means "the abomination that desolates or appals". Here it refers to the image Antichrist had set up of himself as God in the temple, which people were forced to worship, or be killed (CP 2Th 2:3-4; Rev 13:1-6, 11-15). See also comments on Mt 24:1-3; Jn 5:43; Rev 13:1-7, 14:14-16, 16:16, 19:11-21.

6:5-6 *What does the opening of the third seal here signify?*

Here famine is personified as the rider of the black horse. The exorbitant price of grain and the scales for weighing it symbolizes the scarcity of food and the economic hardship the world will undergo during Antichrist's reign (CP Eze 4:16-17; Mt 24:5-8). It is not clear what the command not to hurt the oil and the wine means. Knowing is not fundamental to salvation so it serves no purpose to speculate.

6:7-8 *What does the opening of the fourth seal here signify?*

Death and hell are personified here as two horsemen. Together with the previous two horsemen - the sword, and famine - and the beasts of the earth, they will kill a quarter of the earth's population. There will be an intensification of war, famine, pestilence, evil beasts, and death (CP Lev 26:22; Eze 5:16-17; 14:21; 33:27-29). The four horsemen involved symbolically in these judgments are known in Christendom as "the four horsemen of the apocalypse".

6:9-11 *What does the opening of the fifth seal here signify?*

This signifies the multitude of saints who will be martyred during the tribulation (CP Mt 24:9; Rev 7:9-14; 17:6). They were beheaded for their witness to Christ (CP Rev 13:7-8, 15-17; 14:13; 15:2-4; 20:4). These are not the church saints as so many Christians believe. The church and the Old Testament saints were raptured to heaven, which God had predestined before these things - *the things which must be hereafter* - began in Rev 4 (CP 4:1). The tribulation saints' cry for God to avenge their blood in Rev 6:10 is for the vindication of God's justice, not for personal vengeance. It is a prayer that the wicked who have rejected God and killed His saints, will receive divine justice (CP Ro 12:19 with Rev 18:1-2, 5, 7, 15-16, 20; 19:2).

It should be noted here that the only ones who will be saved during the tribulation are those who have never had an adequate opportunity to receive the knowledge of the truth or to hear and understand the gospel while the church is on earth - before it is raptured to heaven (CP 2Th 2:7-12). This teaches us that salvation will no longer be available to those who have already heard the gospel and rejected it, once the church is taken out of the way. This includes members of our immediate family and other relatives and friends whom we dearly love, as well as professing Christians not truly committed to Christ, and others who are backslidden. Show them all this scripture and explain what it means, so that they may be won to Christ. There is no time to lose - the rapture could happen at any moment; there are no prophecies yet to be fulfilled for the rapture to happen (CP Php 3:20-21; Tit 2:13).

6:12-17 *What does the opening of the sixth seal here signify?*

Here, for the first time since the seals were opened, we see God's judgment upon sinners. Prior to this, the

sword, representing war, famine, death and hell were the natural consequences of Antichrist going forth "conquering and to conquer" (CP 6:1-9). Now, in V12, God unleashes His judgment upon the earth from which there will be no escape for those left on earth who have heard the gospel and rejected it, after the church is raptured to heaven (CP V15-17 with Lu 14:24 and Ro 1:32; 2Th 2:7-12). When God brings down his judgment upon the earth during the tribulation, sinners would rather be crushed to death by mountains and rocks than endure the judgment of God and the wrath of Jesus (CP Hos 10:8; Lu 23:27-30). This is the wrath from which Christ promised to save the church (CP Ro 5:8-9; Eph 5:1-6; 1Th 1:10; 5:2-11; 2Pe 2:9; Rev 3:10).

God's judgment on the earth in Rev 6:12-17 will be so cataclysmic it will cause the sky to recede as if it were a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved from its position (CP He 12:26-27).

7:1-8 *Who are the hundred and forty-four thousand Jews here and why are they sealed with the seal of God in their foreheads?*

These hundred and forty-four thousand Jews are not symbolic, as many believe. They do not represent the church or any professing Christian organization. They are true Jews - twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, named in V5-8 - who will be sealed with the seal of God in their foreheads to ensure their safety during the trumpet judgments of God on the earth during the first three and a half years of the tribulation (CP 8:1-2, 6 - 9:1, 13 with 9:4). The hundred and forty-four thousand are raptured to heaven between the seventh trumpet and the first vial, or plague judgments, are poured out upon the earth. This is in the middle of the tribulation (CP 14:1-5 with 15:1, 6-8). We know the hundred and forty-four thousand are in heaven at this time, because Re 14:3-4 teaches that they were redeemed *from* the earth, and *from* among men. Mount Zion in Rev 14:1 is the heavenly Mt Zion (CP He 12:18-23).

Some in the church believe that the hundred and forty-four thousand Jews were instrumental in the salvation of countless numbers of both Jews and Gentiles during the first three and a half years of the tribulation, and they use Rev 7:9-17 to support this teaching (CP 7:9-17). These saints were all saved out of the tribulation, but there is nothing in this passage of scripture to indicate that the hundred and forty-four thousand Jews were instrumental in their salvation. The significance of the hundred and forty-four thousand is that they will be the firstfruits out of the tribulation of a new redeemed Israel as Rev 14:4 clearly teaches (CP Ro 9:27; 11:1-5). The statement in Rev 14:4 that "these are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins", can be taken literally to mean that they were celibate, which enabled them to care more for the things of God (CP 1Cor 7:32-33). Or, it can be taken figuratively to mean that they were spiritually pure, not having defiled themselves with the uncleanness and whoredom attendant on idolatry (CP 2Cor 11:2). Both interpretations can be applied to the hundred and forty-four thousand. (For a further study on the

hundred and forty-four thousand see comments on Rev 12:1-5).

7:9-17 *See comments on Rev 6:9-11*

8:1-6 *How are we to interpret the opening of the seventh seal here?*

The opening of the seventh seal here reveals the seven trumpet judgments of God about to be unleashed upon the earth in response to the prayers of saints (CP V4 with 5:8; 6:9-11). When the seventh seal is opened there is silence in heaven for half an hour. Most bible commentators agree that this silence signifies the awe and anticipation in heaven at the grim reality of the seven trumpet judgments about to be unleashed on the earth. The trumpet judgments will not affect the church; it has already been raptured and is in heaven when the trumpets sound, as our previous studies on Rev 1:19 and 3:7-13 clearly prove. Many in the church see the trumpet judgments as symbolic, not literal, but they are to be taken just as literally as the seven seals that precedes them, and the seven vial, or bowl judgments which follow (CP Rev 8:7; 8:8-9; 8:10-11; 8:12; 9:1-12; 9:13-21; 10:7).

The trumpet judgments are also as literal as God's judgments which brought plagues upon Egypt in the Old Testament (CP Ex 7:19-21; 8:5-6, 16-17, 24; 9:5-6, 8-10, 22-26; 10:12-15, 21-23; 11:1, 4-7; 12:29-30). These were all literal judgments and so are all the judgments God will pour out upon the earth in the tribulation. They have been foretold throughout scripture (CP Mt 24:7-8, 21-22; Lu 21:22-26; Ro 2:5-9; 5:9; Eph 5:6; Col 3:5-6; 1Th 1:10; Rev 6:12-17; 16:1-12, 17-21). The first trumpet judgment in Rev 8:7 is similar to the seventh Egyptian plague in Ex 9:22-26, and will be just as literal (CP Rev 8:7 with Ex 9:22-23). The second trumpet judgment in Rev 8:8-9 undoubtedly refers to a huge meteorite cast into the sea. (Meteorites burn up when they enter earth's atmosphere). It contaminates a third of the sea, turning it into blood and killing a third of all the sea creatures. It also destroys a third of the ships. In the first plague in Egypt in Ex 7:19-21 every drop of water in the land turned to blood: streams, rivers, ponds, even pools of water (CP Rev 8:8-9 with Ex 7:19-21). The same thing will happen in the second and third vial judgments, after the trumpet judgments are complete (CP Rev 16:3-6).

8:13 *What do we learn from what the angel pronounces here?*

This clearly refutes any suggestion that the seven trumpet judgments are not literal. Here an angel (KJV), flies in the midst of heaven warning the inhabitants of the earth of the terrible things they must still suffer when the three remaining trumpets are sounded. The first four trumpet judgments were bad enough, but they will be nowhere near as devastating as the next three (CP Rev 9:1-12; 13-21; 10:7 with 11:14-15 and 12:12). It should be noted here that Rev 8:13 is not teaching that angels have wings. Angels can fly without wings (CP Rev 14:6-20). Men in their imaginings have depicted angels with wings, but that is not taught anywhere in scripture. Most modern bible versions have translated *angel* in 8:13 as "eagle".

9:1-2 *How are we to understand the fifth trumpet judgment here?*

The fifth trumpet judgment and the first woe are synonymous with each other (CP 8:13). The fifth, sixth and seventh trumpet judgments will bring down unimaginable punishment on the inhabitants of earth. In the fifth trumpet judgment here hordes of demon locusts are loosed upon the earth to torment the inhabitants for five months. They will inflict pain upon the people like scorpion bites. The pain will be so terrible that those who are stung will want to die, but cannot. The only humans the demon locusts cannot touch are those with the seal of God in their foreheads. This is a reference to the hundred and forty-four thousand Jews, who will be raptured to heaven between the seventh trumpet judgment and the first vial, or plague judgment (CP Rev 7:1-8; 14:1-5 with 15:1, 6-8).

The star that fell from heaven, to whom was given the key of the bottomless pit, was an angel of God - not a fallen angel, or Satan, as so many in the church believe. God would not entrust the key of the bottomless pit, which is a prison for fallen angels/demon spirits, to another fallen angel, or Satan. Furthermore, Satan is in heaven at this time - he was not cast out into the earth until Rev 12 (CP 12:7-13). Also, a fallen angel would hardly cast his own master - Satan - in chains into the bottomless pit, as the angel with the key of the bottomless pit does (CP Rev 20:1-3). This is undoubtedly the same angel of God who was given the key of the bottomless pit in Rev 9:1. This angel is not to be confused with the angel of the bottomless pit in 9:11, who is a fallen angel (CP 9:11). This also is not Satan, as many others think. This angel will be loosed together with the demon locusts when the angel of God opens the pit. He will direct the demon locusts. This completes the first of the three woes, but the worst is yet to come.

9:13-21 *How are we to understand the sixth trumpet judgment here?*

The sixth trumpet judgment is synonymous with the second woe (CP 8:13). The four angels that are bound here are fallen angels. God has ordained their release to occur at a fixed moment in time, to kill a third of all who are left on the earth "... and the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month and a year, for to slay the third part of men" (CP V15). The four angels will lead the 200,000,000 demon horsemen, who are loosed from the bottomless pit, in executing this judgment on a third of the world's inhabitants. These will be wounded by the horses' tails, and killed by the fire and smoke and brimstone which issues from their mouths (CP V16-19). Those who are left on the earth still will not repent though, or give up their idol worship (CP V20-21). They would rather suffer and blaspheme God than let Him be glorified in their salvation (CP Rev 16:8-11, 21). This demonstrates the depths of man's depravity and underlines the reason why God will pour out His judgment upon the earth in the first place (CP Ecc 9:3; Jer 17:9-10 with Psa 62:11-12; Jer 32:19; Ro 2:5-6; Jas 5:1-8; Rev 11:3, 6).

10:1-7 **Who is the mighty angel here and what is the mystery of God that will be fulfilled during the seventh trumpet judgment?**

The mighty angel here is Jesus. Only Jesus could refer, as this angel does, to the two witnesses in chapter 11, as *my two witnesses* (CP Rev 11:1-3). Also, the mighty angel is carrying the book Jesus received from God in Rev 5. Only Jesus could open this book and loose its seven seals (CP Rev 5:1-2, 5, 7-9). Rev 10:1-11 is a parenthetical passage. This means that it has been inserted here between the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments, to explain things that are not part of the trumpet judgments, but occur at the same time. The book Jesus holds is not the book of life, as some believe, but a book of judgment, as we learned in our study on Rev 5:1-7. (See comments on 5:1-7).

The mystery of God which He has declared to the prophets, that will be fulfilled during the seventh trumpet judgment, is revealed in Rev 12. The seventh trumpet judgment is synonymous with the third woe pronounced by the angel flying in the midst of heaven after the fourth trumpet judgment (CP Rev 8:12-13 with 11:14-15 and 12:7-12). The third woe synonymous with the seventh trumpet judgment is the casting down of Satan out of heaven to the earth in Rev 12:7-12, "... woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth he has but a short time". This is the mystery of God which He has declared to the prophets that will be delayed no longer. It will be fulfilled during the seventh trumpet judgment. The casting down of Satan out of heaven to the earth has been prophesied since the world began (CP Gen 3:15; Psa 91:13; Isa 14:12-15; 24:21; 25:7; 27:1; Eze 28:11-19; Lu 10:17-19; Ro 16:20).

10:8-11 **How are we to understand John eating the book here?**

This is best understood in the light of Eze 2:8 - 3:3 (CP Eze 2:8 - 3:3). This is the same teaching in effect as Rev 10:8-11. In their visions John and Ezekiel both ate the books. The books represent God's word. They were sweet in John and Ezekiel's mouths, but bitter in their bellies, which symbolizes the mixture of blessings and curses in God's word. God's word is sweet to those who accept it, but it is also bitter in that it pronounces judgment on those who reject it (CP Psa 9:7-11; 119:103-105; Jer 15:16 with Eze 2:1-7; 3:4-7; Amos 5:10; Lu 19:41-44; Jn 12:48). After he ate the book John was told that he must prophecy even further yet. He did this throughout the rest of Revelation.

11:1-2 **What temple is referred to here and what purpose was served in measuring it?**

The temple of God here does not exist yet. It will be rebuilt by the Jews before the commencement of the seven years reign of Antichrist, who desecrates it in the middle of his reign by placing an image of himself as God, in it, and forcing people to worship the image

or be killed. It will be made desolate for the last three and a half years of the tribulation after Antichrist breaks his peace treaty with Israel (CP Dan 7:25; 8:9-14; 9:27; 12:7-12; Mt 24:15-21; 2Th 2:3-4; Rev 13:11-15). The phrase *a time, times, and half a time, or the dividing of time* in scripture refers to the last three and a half years - or forty-two months, as in Rev 11:2 - of the tribulation (CP Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev 12:14). Rev 11:3 and 12:6 refers to this period as *a thousand two hundred and three score days* (CP Rev 11:3; 12:6). During this time Antichrist makes war on Israel until God purges Israel of every rebel (CP Eze 20:33-38; Zech 13:8-9; Mal 3:1-6). We learn in Zech 13:8-9 here that altogether two thirds of the nation of Israel will perish in the tribulation.

Measuring the Jewish part of the temple - the altar and those who worship there - and not the court of the Gentiles, symbolizes measuring the spiritual condition of the Jews preparatory to their being trodden underfoot by the gentiles, under Antichrist. They will trample down both the temple, and Jerusalem (CP Lu 21:22-28; Ro 11:25). We also learn from these scriptures that the times of the Gentiles will not end until the second three and a half years of the tribulation are finished, and Christ comes back to earth. He will deliver the Jews from the Gentiles under Antichrist, and set up an earthly kingdom over them forever (CP Dan 2:44; 7:13-14, 18, 27; Lu 1:32-33; Rev 11:15; 19:11-21).

11:3-6 **Who are the two witnesses?**

The general consensus among bible commentators is that the two witnesses here are Moses and Elijah. But we can only be certain from scripture of Elijah (CP Mal 4:5-6). "Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" refers to the latter half of the tribulation leading up to Christ's second coming and the battle of Armageddon. *A thousand two hundred and three score days* is three and a half years. The two witnesses' testimony during these last three and a half years will turn multitudes of people back to God. While scriptures do not directly teach who the other witness is, they point to Enoch. Of all the Old Testament saints, only he and Elijah are yet to die. Scriptures teach that everyone under the curse - except the saints still living at the rapture - has to die once (CP He 9:27). Enoch and Elijah are still living; they were translated alive to heaven (CP Gen 5:21-24; 2 Ki 2:1, 9-12). In light of He 9:27 Moses could not be the other witness, because he has already died once (CP De 34:5-8). Enoch and Elijah are the only Old Testament saints who are yet to die. They will die as God's two witnesses when they finish their testimony at the end of the three and a half years. Thus scripture will be fulfilled (CP Rev 11:7-12). For a detailed study on the beast from the bottomless pit that kills the two witnesses see comments on Rev 17:7-17.

11:14-19 **How are we to understand what is said here?**

The third woe in V14 is the last of the three woes pronounced by the angel flying in the midst of heaven in Rev 8:13. These three woes are synonymous with the fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpet judgments (CP 8:13). As we learned in our study on Rev 10:1-7, the

third woe synonymous with the seventh trumpet judgment is the casting down of Satan out of heaven to the earth. This is the mystery of God which He has declared to the prophets, that will be delayed no longer. It will be fulfilled at this time (CP Rev 10:1-7; 12:7-12 (See also comments on Rev 10:1-7)). The seventh trumpet judgment involves the events of the last three and a half years of the tribulation leading up to Christ's second coming. It includes the seven vial or bowl judgments beginning in Rev 16:1 (CP 16:1-4, 8, 10, 12, 17). In Rev 11:16 the church, represented by the twenty-four elders, prophesy what will happen at Christ's second coming: hostile nations will be overcome by God's wrath (CP Psa 21:9; Isa 26:20-21; 30:27-28; 2Th 1:7-10); the wicked dead will be judged at the great white throne judgment at the end of Christ's millennial reign on earth (CP Rev 20:11-15). Satan though will be judged both before and after Christ's millennial reign (CP Rev 20:1-10). The saints will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ in heaven. Scriptures do not say when, so it is no use speculating (CP Ro 14:10-12; 1Cor 3:11-15; 2Cor 5:10 (See also comments on Ro 14:10-12 and 1Cor 3:11-15)).

By His defeat of Satan, God becomes sovereign over the kingdom of this world. Until then Satan is its prince, or god (CP Jn 12:31; 14:30; 2Cor 4:3-4; Eph 2:1-2). Although God is sovereign over the kingdom of this world after He casts out Satan, it will still be three and a half years before He actually takes possession of the earth because the tribulation has to run its course first. The temple of God being opened to reveal the ark of the covenant in Rev 11:19, signifies God's redeeming purpose in the midst of judgment (CP 11:19).

12:1-5 Who does this woman and the man-child symbolize?

The woman here symbolizes the nation of Israel. Israel is depicted many times in scripture as a woman in travail giving birth (CP Isa 26:16-18; 54:1-6; 66:7-12; Hos 1:2-11; Mic 4:10; 5:2-3). The twelve stars represent the twelve tribes of Israel. *The great red dragon* is Satan (CP Job 41; Psa 74:14; 91:13; Isa 27:1; Rev 13:2-4; 16:13; 20:2). Satan, together with Antichrist, makes war on Israel during the second three and a half years of the tribulation, after he is cast out of heaven down to the earth (CP Dan 7:7-8, 21, 24-25; 8:24-25; 2Th 2:8-9; Rev 6:4; 12:4, 7-17; 13:1-8). Having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns on his heads, symbolizes Satan's domination of seven past world kingdoms and ten future world kingdoms which he will dominate through his empowering of Antichrist (CP Dan 7:7-8, 24-25; 2 Th 2:7-9; Rev 13:1-8). (See also comments on Rev 13:1-7, 17:1-6, 17:7-17)). *A third of the stars of heaven* symbolize the number of angels cast out of heaven down to earth with Satan (CP Isa 14:12-15; Eze 28:11-19; Rev 12:7-9).

The general consensus among bible commentators is that the man-child the woman brought forth in Rev 12:5, who will rule all nations with a "rod of iron", and who was caught up to God and His throne is Jesus (CP 12:5). The difficulty with the view that this is Jesus however is that it looks back on the past,

whereas everything that is revealed to John from Rev 4:1 onward pertains to the future (CP Rev 1:19; 4:1). *Things which must be hereafter* clearly refer to future, not past things, and on that basis the man-child in Rev 12:5 cannot represent Jesus in the past, but something that will be fulfilled in the future - in the tribulation, because the woman gives birth during the tribulation. The only thing caught up to God - raptured to heaven - during the tribulation, which the man-child could possibly represent, are the hundred and forty-four thousand Jews - the firstfruits out of the tribulation of a new redeemed Israel (CP Isa 66:7-8; Jer 30:6-9; Dan 12:1; Rev 7:1-8; 14:1-5 with Ro 9:27; 11:1-5).

These scriptures all point to the man-child as representing the hundred and forty-four thousand Jews. They are before the throne of God in Rev 14:3 just as the man-child was "caught up unto God and His throne" in Rev 12:5. *Man-child* in Isa 66:7 is referred to as *her children* in 66:8. In Jer 30 the man-child - *he* - in V7, is called *they* in V9. Daniel prophesied in Dan 12:1 that every Jew whose name is written in the book of life will be delivered - raptured to heaven - in the middle of the tribulation after Satan is cast out of heaven down to the earth. This is what happened to the man-child in Rev 12:5 (CP 12:5). We know that the names of the hundred and forty-four thousand are written in the book of life because they are sealed with the seal of God. They are the only ones living on earth who will not be affected by the trumpet judgments during the first three and a half years of the tribulation, before they are raptured to heaven (CP Rev 7:1-4; 8:1-2, 6; 9:1-4). Finally, Rev 14:3-4 teaches that the hundred and forty-four thousand were redeemed by Jesus **from** (out of) the earth, and **from** (out of), among men, to heaven. Mount Zion, on which they stand with Jesus in 14:1 is the heavenly, not the earthly Mount Zion (CP He 12:18-23). As was the man-child, so too the hundred and forty-four thousand Jews are raptured in the middle of the tribulation, between the seventh trumpet and the first plague judgment (CP Rev 14:1-5 with 15:1, 6-8 (See also comments on Rev 7:1-8)).

The rod of iron with which the man-child is to rule all nations in Rev 12:5, simply means to rule with authority. All the redeemed of God will rule with authority like Jesus (CP Psa 2:7-9; Psa 149:5-9; Dan 7:18, 27; Mt 19:28; 1Cor 6:2; Rev 1:4-6; 2:26-27; 5:10; 20:4-6; 22:4-5). These scriptures all prove that it is not only Jesus who is ordained to rule with a "rod of iron".

Some in the church believe that the sun with which the woman is clothed in Rev 12:1 symbolizes the righteousness of Christ; the moon under her feet represents Jewish ordinances superseded by the teachings of Christ, and the twelve stars on her head symbolize the twelve apostles. None of this of course has any biblical basis whatever and it must be rejected. Another view is that the sun, moon and stars depict the glory and dominion which Israel has been promised in the coming kingdom, but again there is no biblical basis for this view. It is futile to speculate what the sun and moon mean without any clear scriptural guidelines.

Another view of the man-child is that it represents the church. This originates in the belief that the seventh

trumpet in Rev 11:5 is the same as the "last trump" which precedes the rapture of the church in both 1Cor 15:52 and 1Th 4:16 (CP Rev 11:15 with 1Cor 15:51-58 and 1Th 4:13-18). Our previous study on Rev 11:14-19 clearly refutes this teaching - the seventh trumpet sounds midway through the tribulation. Also the church has been raptured by Rev 4:1 which sees the emergence of Antichrist and the onset of the tribulation (See comments on Rev 1:19, 3:7-13 and 11:14-19). Still another view is that the man-child is the "bride part" of the church. This teaching claims that the bride of Christ is not the whole church but a select company of believers - the man-child - out of the church. The theory is that the man-child represents only those believers who have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and that all other believers compose the woman and the remnant who are left behind on earth after the rapture to go through the tribulation. Those who espouse this view use the parable of the ten virgins to support it. In affect they are teaching that the church consists of two classes of believers, which is totally unscriptural (See comments on Mt 25:1-13). The church consists of only one class of believer (CP 1Cor 12:12-28; Eph 2:13-22; 4:1-6, etc). Scriptures must be the final arbiter on all matters of doctrine. The only view on doctrine to which we can hold, is that which can be proved by scripture. All other views must be rejected (CP Ac 17:10-11; 1Th 5:21; 1Jn 4:1).

12:6 *How are we to understand this?*

In our study on Rev 12:1-5 we learned that the woman symbolizes the nation of Israel. Here she flees into the wilderness where God has prepared a place of refuge for her to escape Satan's wrath after he is cast out of heaven down to earth and fails to destroy the "man-child" the woman gives birth to (CP Rev 12:1-17). We also learned in our study on 12:1-5 that the man-child symbolizes the hundred and forty-four thousand Jews - the firstfruits out of the tribulation of a new, redeemed Israel (See comments on Rev 7:1-8 and 12:1-5).

When Satan cannot destroy the hundred and forty-four thousand Jews because they are "caught up unto God" - raptured to heaven (12:5) - he persecutes the woman through Antichrist. He causes Antichrist to break his seven-year peace treaty with Israel in the middle of the treaty, and empowers him to make war with Israel during the last three and a half years of the tribulation "... a thousand two hundred and three score days" (CP Dan 7:7-8, 21, 24-25; 8:8-10, 23-25; 9:27; 2Th 2:7-9; Rev 13:1-2, 4-7). *A time and times and the dividing of times* in Dan 7:25 also refers to the last three and a half years of the tribulation. *The two wings of a great eagle* in Rev 12:14, symbolizes how God sustains Israel during her flight from the forces of Antichrist and for the three and a half years she is in the wilderness. This symbolism has its origin in the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt (CP Ex 19:4; De 32:11-12; Isa 63:9). The "water as a flood" which the dragon casts out of his mouth after the woman in Rev 12:15, refers to the armies of Antichrist. Armies are often symbolized by floods in the Old Testament (CP Jer 46:7-8; 47:1-4; Dan 9:26-27; 11:21-26, 40). The earth will open up and swallow the armies of Antichrist as it swallowed up

those who rebelled against Moses in the Old Testament (CP Nu 16:28-35). The remnant of the woman's seed in Rev 12:17 which the dragon went to make war with after the woman escaped from the armies of Antichrist are Jews who did not flee with the woman into the wilderness. They obviously get saved after the hundred and forty-four thousand are raptured. The name of the place in the wilderness to which the woman will flee is Petra, or Sela, as it is also called, which is located in Moab (CP Isa 16:1-5; 26:20).

13:1-7 *Who is this beast out of the sea?*

The beast out of the sea here is Antichrist. This is the same beast that carries the great whore in Rev 17:3. They both have seven heads and ten horns. Satan is also depicted like this (CP Rev 12:1-5; 17:1-7). It is generally agreed among bible commentators that the symbolism of the leopard in Rev 13:2 typifies Greece; the bear, Medo-Persia; and the lion, Babylon. They were all violent and cruel oppressors of Israel during the Old Testament period before the Romans conquered Israel, and the fact that John saw them depicted in the beast means that Antichrist will combine all their evil features (CP V2) (For a detailed study on the symbolism of the seven heads and the ten horns in Rev 13:1 see comments on Rev 17:7-17)). The sea out of which Antichrist rises up symbolizes peoples, nations, multitudes and tongues; inhabitants of the earth (CP Dan 7:2-3; Rev 17:1, 15). Antichrist is a human being who rises up to power from the sea of humanity. He is not a supernatural being as so many Christians believe, but is empowered to do signs and wonders and work miracles, by both Satan and the beast out of the earth, which God permits. Many inhabitants of the earth at that time will think that Antichrist died of his head wound in Rev 13:3 and that God brought him back to life, thus duplicating Christ's death and resurrection, and attesting to Antichrist's deity. But the healing will be effected by Satan and the false prophet to deceive the people into worshipping Antichrist's image, believing him to be God. (CP Dan 8:23-24; 2Th 2:7-10; Rev 13:1-8; 13:11-15; 16:13-14; 19:20). It is pointless speculating who Antichrist is - scriptures are silent in this regard. However, they do tell us where he comes from (CP Isa 10:20-27; 14:24-27; 30:27-31; 31:4-9; Dan 11:36 - 12:13; Mic 5:3-15). Antichrist is an Assyrian - he comes from Syria. These scriptures all refer to Antichrist, including Dan 11:36 - 12:13. *The north* in Dan 11:36-45 refers to Syria. (See also comments on Mt 24:1-3; Jn 5:43; Rev 6:1-2, 14:14-16, 16:16, 19:11-21)

13:8 *Does this teach as some claim that the names of those whom God has predestined for salvation have been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world?*

No, although a great many Christians believe it does. The underlying teaching here though, is that it was God's redemptive plan for fallen man through Christ's atoning death that God predestined from the foundation of the world - not the individual conformity to the plan (CP Gen 3:15; Isa 9:6-7;

28:16; 52:13-15; 53:1-12; Mt 1:20-23; Lu 1:26-33, 68-71; 24:25-27, 44-48; Jn 1:29; Ro 3:21-25; 2Ti 1:1, 8-10; 1Pe 1:18-20). These scriptures all teach - and they are not exhaustive, but merely representative of the body of truth - that it was the redemptive death of Christ for the salvation of humanity that God decreed from the foundation of the world. Every member of the human race has their name written in the book of life from their mother's womb, but it is whether it stays written in the book that counts in eternity. Only the names of those who conform to God's plan of redemption remain in the book. The rest are blotted out (CP Psa 139:15-16 with Ex 32:31-34; De 9:13-14; Psa 69:28; 109:13; Dan 12:1; Php 4:3; Rev 3:5; 17:8; 20:12-15; 21:27; 22:18-19). It is plainly evident from scripture that God does not predestine who will be saved. Individuals choose for themselves (See also comments on Mt 20:16, Lu 14:16-24, Jn 3:36, 6:37, Php 4:3)

13:10 *What do we learn from this?*

This is encouraging the tribulation saints to persevere in faith in spite of persecution (CP Rev 12:11, 17; 14:12-13). Those who stand in faith can rest assured that their persecutors will also suffer in return for what they do to them. Those who are martyred for their testimony during the tribulation will be especially blessed. They will be released from all pain and suffering and go to be with Jesus (CP Rev 14:13). Believers may have to lose their life in this world to save it in the next (CP Mk 8:34-38; Rev 6:9-11; 7:9-17; 20:4). See also comments on Rev 14:13.

13:11-18 *Who is this beast and what does the number 666 signify?*

Another beast here signifies another man in addition to the man - Antichrist - symbolized by the first beast in V1(CP V1). Earth in V 11, like sea in V1, is used symbolically of peoples. It is also the same Greek word as *world* in V 3, which symbolizes the inhabitants of the earth (CP V 3 with Gen 9:19; 11:1; 19:31; Rev 6:8; 11:6; 19:2). Thus we see that the man which the beast symbolizes in Rev 13:11 is also a human being like Antichrist. He too is not a supernatural being, as so many suppose. Some believe that he is Judas reincarnated, brought up from the underworld. If that was correct it means that Judas would then die twice, not once, yet scripture clearly teaches that everyone under the curse - except the saints still living at the time of the rapture - only has to die once (CP He 9:27 with 1 Th 4:16-18). Two horns like a lamb symbolize the man as gentle natured, but in reality ... *and he spake like a dragon* depicts his real nature. He is an evil monster (CP Rev 13:11).

John refers to him as "the false prophet". He is empowered to work miracles and deceive people into believing that Antichrist is God. He will enable the image of Antichrist, which will be set up in the temple, to talk as God. He will cause people to worship the image and will behead those who refuse (CP Rev 13:12-15 with Mt 24:15; 2Th 2:3-4 and Rev 20:4). He will also cause people to receive the mark, or the name, or the number, of Antichrist in their right hand or in their foreheads, in order to buy and sell. It

is better to die though than to receive any of these marks, or worship the beast, for all who do so will be destroyed by God (CP Rev 13:16-17 with 14:9-11). After their defeat by Jesus at Armageddon, the false prophet and Antichrist will both be cast alive into the lake of fire (CP Rev 19:19-20). Satan will be bound in chains and cast into the bottomless pit during Christ's thousand years reign on earth, but he will be let loose at the end of the thousand years for a short time, and will try to start another rebellion against God. He will fail again and will then be cast into the lake of fire with Antichrist and the false prophet, to be tormented day and night for ever and ever (CP Rev 20:1-3, 7-10).

It is pointless speculating what the mark of the beast / Antichrist will be. It is not his name or the number of his name, 666, for the mark, his name and the number of his name are all different. Scriptures clearly distinguish between them (CP Rev 13:16-18; 14:9; 15:2-4; 20:4). All we know is that it will be a literal mark (CP 13:16; 14:9).

Opinions vary among Christians as to which of the beasts in Rev 13 is Antichrist. Some hold to the first, others to the second. This study clearly proves the first is Antichrist. Being correct though is not fundamental to salvation, so when opinions differ let us agree to disagree in love.

14:1-5 *See comments on Rev 7:1-8 and 12:1-5.*

14:6-7 *What is the everlasting gospel?*

This is the same gospel message that has been proclaimed from the beginning. It will continue throughout the remaining three and a half years of the tribulation (CP Mt 24:14). The significance of the gospel at this time is that it is proclaimed to counteract the deceptions by Antichrist and the false prophet. They will deceive people by the signs and wonders and miracles they perform into believing that Antichrist is God (CP Dan 11:36-39; 2 Th 2:3-4, 7-9; Rev 13:1-5, 11-18). The emphasis on the angel's gospel message is to fear God rather than Antichrist; to give glory to God rather than to man; and to worship God, not the image. God will also send His two witnesses - Enoch and Elijah - to preach the gospel at this time. They too will testify to God's salvation during the last three and a half years of the tribulation (CP Rev 11:3-12).

14:8 *See comments on Rev 18:1-3.*

14:9-11 *What do we learn from what the angel says here?*

What the angel pronounces here emphasizes the absolute reality of hell, which sadly, many professing Christians believe is merely symbolic, not literal. Yet throughout scripture hell is depicted as a literal place of eternal punishment for the ungodly (CP De 32:22; Psa 9:17; 55:15; Pr 15:11, 24; 23:13-14; Isa 5:14; 14:12-15; 66:24; Dan 7:9-11). Jesus Himself teaches that hell is a literal place of eternal punishment; a place of unquenchable fire where the ungodly are tormented day and night for ever (CP Mt 5:22, 29-30;

7:19; 13:36-42, 47-50; 25:31-46; Mk 9:43-48; Lu 12:4-5; 16:19-31; Jn 15:5-6). We see in all these scriptures that hell is both a judgment of punishment upon sinners, and a place in which the punishment occurs (CP Mt 8:12; 10:28; 18:8-9; 23:33; 25:24-30; Mk 3:29; Lu 10:15, 12:5; Ro 2:4-5; Php 3:18-19; 2Th 1:7-9; He 10:39; Jas 3:6; 2Pe 2:17; Jude 6-13, 21-23; Rev 2:11).

In the Old Testament hell is **sheol**, which means the world of the dead; the unseen world of departed spirits. Its corresponding word in the New Testament is **hades**, which means the region of the departed spirits of the lost. In the New Testament hell is also derived from the Greek word **geenna** - transliterated in English as **gehenna** - which means a place or state of the lost and condemned; the final destiny of the wicked. Clearly these all define hell as a literal place; a place of eternal punishment and torments; a place of unquenchable fire, expressing divine judgment. And the fact that the fire is unquenchable teaches that the punishment is unending, eternal. This clearly refutes the doctrine of complete annihilation of the unbelievers; that they do not undergo a permanent and changed state of being involving punishment and pain, as some teach. The state of human beings after death in sheol / hades, or hell is irreversible, although none of these places constitute the eternal state of sinners. Hades and hell are cast into the lake of fire at the great white throne judgment. The lake of fire is the final place of torment into which Satan and all the fallen angels, Antichrist and the false prophet, and everyone who ever lived whose names are not found written in the book of life, will be cast. This is called the second death (CP Rev 19:20; 20:4-6, 10-15; 21:7-8 with Isa 66:24). The first death is physical death at the end of one's earthly life.

Scriptures also refute the teaching that hell and the grave are one, as some believe. They are two distinct places as proved by scripture. The grave only holds the body, whereas hell holds both the soul and the spirit (CP Eze 31:14-17; 32:22-32). Here we see that hell and graves are clearly distinguishable. (See also comments on Rev 20:11-15).

14:13 *Why will those who die from that time be blessed?*

Because they will be martyred for their witness to Christ and their refusal to worship Antichrist and his image, or take his mark. The dead referred to here are those killed during the last three and a half years of the tribulation. They will be released from persecution, torture and suffering and taken to be with Jesus (CP Rev 7:9-14; 15:2; 20:4). *Works* in Rev 14:13 (KJV), refers to the results of their labours in the Lord. None of what they have done is wasted. God blesses them for it in the end (CP 1Cor 15:58). See also comments on Rev 13:10.

14:14-16 *What is the harvest of the earth being reaped here?*

The harvest of the earth being reaped here is a harvest of judgment. It is not the harvest of the tribulation martyrs as many suppose (CP V17-20; Joel 3:9-16 with Jer 25:30-33; 46:9-10; Hos 6:11; Zeph 3:8;

Zech 14:1-7). These scriptures all point to the battle of Armageddon and Christ's final dealing with all who inhabit the earth. Armageddon is the "great winepress of the wrath of God" in Rev 14:19 (CP Rev 19:11-21 (also 2Th 1:7-10; 2:7-9; Isa 34:1-8; 63:1-6; Jude 14-15). We learn in Rev 14:20 that the blood shed at Armageddon will flow for a distance of two hundred miles (approx 320km), at a depth of 1.2m, "... up to the horses' bridles". (See also comments on Mt 24:1-3; Jn 5:43; Rev 6:1-2, 13:1-7, 16:16, 19:11-21).

15:1 *What are the seven last plagues referred to here?*

(CP also V5-7). The seven last plagues are (1) ulcers (CP Rev 16:2); (2) the sea turns to blood (CP 16:3); (3) the rivers turn to blood (CP 16:4); (4) men being scorched by fire (CP 16:8); (5) darkness (CP 16:10); (6) River Euphrates dries up (CP 16:12); and (7) a great earthquake and hail (CP 16:18, 21). These plagues are just as literal as the plagues that precede them under the sixth seal (CP Rev 6:12-17), and the seven trumpet judgments (CP Rev 8:7-11; 9:1-12, 13-21; 11:14-19). The seven last plagues complete the outpouring of God's wrath upon the inhabitants of the earth. They are the last of "the things" John was told in Rev 4:1 "which must be hereafter" - after the church is raptured to heaven - before Jesus returns to earth for the battle of Armageddon, prior to setting up His millennial kingdom (CP Rev 19:11-21). For an in-depth study of the plagues see comments on each in study on Rev 16:1.

15:2 *What is significant about the sea of glass here?*

The sea of glass here is covered with people, whereas when John first saw it in Rev 4:6 it was bare (CP Rev 4:1-6). At the time of Rev 4:6 only the church - represented by the twenty-four elders - and the Old Testament saints, were in heaven. In 15:2 the tribulation saints are in heaven and they now cover the sea of glass which is a transparent crystal - like pavement before the throne of God. It stretches out like a glittering sea of glass mingled with fire (CP Ex 24:10).

15:5-8 *Why can no one enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels are fulfilled?*

The significance of no one being able to enter the temple during this time is that nothing can stop the final outpouring of God's wrath. The seven last plagues must be poured out on God's enemies as the last stage of the tribulation prior to Christ's second coming (CP Mt 24:29-31).

16:1 *What does the pouring out of the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth signify?*

The vials contain the seven last plagues - the final outpouring of God's wrath upon sinners - which will bring finality to the tribulation (CP Rev 15:1). These are the last plagues emanating from the seventh trumpet judgment which will complete the seventh seal (CP Rev 8:1-2 with 11:15, 18). The first plague

is directed to fall specifically upon all who take the mark of the beast and worship his image (CP 16:2). "Noisome and grievous sores" are ulcers, or boils. The second plague affects the sea. It will turn to blood and every living thing in it will die (CP 16:3). This is the same plague that falls during the second trumpet judgment in Rev 8:8-9, but then only one third of the sea will turn to blood. Here, all the sea turns to blood (CP Rev 8:8-9). The third plague will fall upon the rivers and fresh-water streams and springs. They will also turn to blood and there will be no fresh drinking-water (CP 16:4-6). The angel in V 6 declares God's judgment of this plague to be fair and proper because its recipients are only getting back their due recompense for the blood of the martyred saints and the prophets which they shed (CP Rev 6:9-11; 17:1-6; 19:1-2 with 11:3, 7-8).

The fourth plague is scorching heat from the sun (CP Rev 16:8-9). However, regardless of the intense sunburn they suffer, men still will not repent, even though they know who causes the suffering, and why. They will still blaspheme God for sending the plagues (CP 9:20-21). The fifth plague is darkness (CP 16:10-11). This is a repeat of the ninth plague on Egypt in Moses' day, but it will be even worse here (CP Ex 10:21-23). The fifth plague in Rev 16, like the first, is directed to fall only on Antichrist's kingdom. His followers will be the only ones affected. Their sores and pains from the previous plagues will not be healed yet and being enveloped in impenetrable blackness will cause them to bite their tongues. But they still will not repent. The sixth plague causes the River Euphrates to dry up (CP Rev 16:12). God has predestined this to enable the armies of the kings of the eastern kingdoms under the control of Antichrist to come to Armageddon where Christ will execute God's vengeance upon them (CP 16:13-16).

These three demon spirits go throughout all the other kingdoms of the world working miracles to induce their kings, who are not under the control of Antichrist, to cooperate with him at Armageddon with their armies, to fight Christ (CP Psalms 2:1-3; Joel 3:1-4; Zech 12:2-9; 14:1-3; Rev 19:11-21). In V15 of Rev 16 there is a blessing pronounced upon all those living at that time who remain faithful to Christ, watching for His return and taking heed to how they walk in the presence of the ungodly (CP 16:15). The seventh and last plague in the tribulation is a great earthquake followed by hail. The earthquake will be the most powerful and devastating earthquake in the history of the world. It will split Jerusalem into three parts, destroy Babylon, the capital of Antichrist's kingdom, and radically alter the earth's topography. Every mountain and island will be moved from their position. This will be followed by an equally devastating hailstorm, with hailstones, each weighing about forty kilograms, bombarding the earth and killing men. They will blaspheme God because the hailstorm is so devastating (CP 16:17-21). The assertion "... it is done" in V17, means that the outpouring of God's wrath upon the earth is now complete. All told, two thirds of the nation of Israel will die in the tribulation (CP Zech 13:8-9). The tribulation will shortly end with Christ's second coming and the battle of Armageddon.

16:16

What is the significance of Armageddon?

The significance of Armageddon is that it will be the scene of the final battle between good and evil. It is here that the armies of Antichrist, which will be mobilised by the demon spirits in Rev 16:13-14 to fight Christ, will nearly all be killed (CP 16:13-14 with 19:11-21). Only one sixth of Antichrist's forces will be spared (CP Eze 39:1-7 (KJV)). The battle of Armageddon will last only one day (CP Isa 30:26; Zech 14:6-7). Yet the blood that is shed in that day will flow for two hundred miles - approximately 320 kilometres - at a depth of 1.2 metres, "... up to the horses bridles" (CP Rev 14:19-20). *Without the city* in V20 (KJV) means outside the city. Armageddon, which means Mountain of Megiddo, is approximately sixty miles north of Jerusalem. It will take seven years to burn the weapons of war from Armageddon, as firewood (CP Eze 39:8-10), and it will take the whole of Israel seven months to bury those killed in the battle, notwithstanding that the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field will also eat the dead bodies (CP Rev 19:17-18 with Eze 39:11-20). See also comments on Mt 24:1-3; Jn 5:43; Rev 6:1-2, 13:1-7, 14:14-16, 19:11-21.

17:1-6

How are we to understand all this symbolism?

First of all, as we learned in our study on Rev 13:1-7, the beast upon which the woman sits symbolizes Antichrist (CP 13:1-7 (see also comments on 13:1-7 and 17:7-17)). The names of blasphemy the beast is full of refers to Antichrist's self-deification (CP Dan 7:25; 11:36-37; 2Th 2:3-4; Rev 13:5-6 (for a detailed study on the symbolism of the seven heads and ten horns etc, see comments on Rev 17:7-17)). The woman in Rev 17:1-6 is called Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth. This Babylon is symbolic, and not to be confused with Great Babylon in Rev 16:19, which is a literal city that will be destroyed in the great earthquake during the seventh vial judgment of God upon the earth at the end of the tribulation (CP Rev 16:17-19 with Isa 13:19-22; Jer 51:5-8, 25-26; Rev 14:8; 18:1-3, 5, 8, 20-21 (for a detailed study on Babylon, the literal city, see comments on Rev 18:1-3)). We see in all those scriptures that God destroys Babylon, the literal city, whereas Antichrist and the ten kings of the ten future world kingdoms, destroy Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth (CP Rev 17:12-17). This clearly proves that they are two distinct entities. Rev 17 is another parenthetical passage. It has been inserted here to show the contrast between symbolic Babylon, and Babylon the literal city. Babylon the literal city however, will be the seat of the apostate religious system (CP 17:18 (see also comments on Rev 17:18)).

Fornication in Rev 17:1-6 is spiritual, it refers to idolatrous religious practices (CP Isa 23:17; 31:3-7; Jer 3:6-9; Eze 16:15-26, 30-32; 20:30-32; 23: 13-17; Hos 4:12-19; 9:1; Nah 3:4; Jas 4:4; Rev 2:20-22). *Abominations* in Rev 17:1-6 covers everything that is detestable to God - especially idolatry and licentiousness. Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth symbolizes a

vast apostate religious system which has its origins in the religious rites and mysteries of ancient Babylon. It is immensely wealthy, and will have dominion over kings and kingdoms, political leaders and nations, and people throughout the earth. These are "the many waters" upon which "the great whore sits" in Rev 17:1-2 (CP Rev 17:7, 12:15). This apostate religious system, in league with Antichrist, will be responsible for shedding the blood of countless Christians for their witness to Christ during the first half of the tribulation (CP Rev 16:4-6 with 6:9-11; 17:6; 19:1-2). Antichrist will turn on the apostate religious system midway through the tribulation in order to set up his own image - the abomination of desolation - in the temple, to be worshipped as God, and the ten kings will destroy the apostate religious system (CP Dan 7:7-8, 21, 24-25; 8:8-12, 23-25; 9:27; 11:31, 36-39 with Mt 24:15; Rev 13:1-8; 17:16-17; 19:1-2).

17:7-17 *How are we to understand the explanation of the beast here?*

We understand from this that the beast here upon which the woman sits, which also rose up out of the sea in Rev 13, does not symbolize Antichrist alone (CP Rev 13:1-7) (see also comments on 13:1-7)). The beast also symbolizes a supernatural being presently confined to the bottomless pit or abyss, who will ascend out of the pit and kill God's two witnesses - Elijah and Enoch - at the end of the tribulation (CP Rev 17:8 with 11:3-7) (see also comments on Rev 11:3-6)). To *go into perdition* means to be destroyed. The beast out of the bottomless pit, together with Antichrist and the false prophet will be destroyed by Christ at the battle of Armageddon (CP Rev 19:19-20). It is pointless speculating exactly who the beast out of the bottomless pit is. Suffice it to say that it is not Antichrist, as so many Christians believe, because the bottomless pit or abyss, is a prison for demon spirits, not humans. Satan will be imprisoned there during the millennial reign of Christ (CP Lu 8:31; Rev 9:1-11; 20:1-3). The beast also symbolizes a kingdom controlled by Antichrist - the eighth, and last world kingdom before Christ's second coming and the battle of Armageddon "... *and the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition*" (CP Rev 17:9-11). *And is of the seven* means that the beast was also one of the seven kingdoms referred to in V 10. He cannot be the sixth kingdom because that is the Roman Empire which ruled over Israel in John's day - *and one is*. Neither can he be the seventh kingdom for that will be ruled by Antichrist - it is *not yet come*. The beast can only be one of the five kingdoms that are *fallen* - which have dominated Israel from when it was first made a captive nation by the Egyptians until it was conquered by the Romans. They are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece.

The sum of the beast is , it represents four things - three future and one past: Antichrist (Rev 13:1-7; 17:1-6, 12-13, 16-17); the supernatural being out of the bottomless pit (Rev 11:3-7; 17:8); one of the five kingdoms that ruled Israel before Rome (Rev 17:11); and the eighth and last world kingdom controlled by Antichrist that will war with Israel before Christ's second coming and the battle of Armageddon (Rev 17:11). The ten horns on the beast symbolize ten

kings and ten future kingdoms that will arise from within the old Roman empire (CP Dan 7:7-8, 19-21, 23-25). The fourth beast here symbolizes the Roman empire - the sixth head on the beast of Rev 17, ... *the beast that is* (CP Rev 17:9-10). The little horn in Dan 7:8, 20, 24, is Antichrist (CP Dan 8:8-13, 23-25; 9:27; 11:36-45; Rev 13:1-7; 17:4). The ten kings will give their kingdoms to Antichrist and destroy the apostate religious system symbolized by the woman on the beast. This has all been foreordained by God in order that His purposes be fulfilled (CP Rev 17:12-17). This will occur in the middle of the tribulation so that Antichrist can set up the image of himself in the temple to be worshipped and proclaim himself to be God (CP Dan 11:31, 36-37; 12:11; Mt 24:15 (also Mk 13:14); 2Th 2:3-4; Rev 13:1-6, 11-15).

17:18 *What great city is referred to here?*

The great city referred to here is the literal city of Babylon - seat of the apostate religious system which the woman, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth symbolizes. The woman and Babylon are two facets of the same city and power: They will both make nations drunk with the wine of their fornications, and be responsible for the death of great multitudes of believers during the tribulation (CP Rev 6:9-11; 7:9-14; 17:1-6 with 18:2-3, 7, 9, 24). See also comments on Rev 17:1-6 and 18:1-3.

18:1-3 *How are we to define Babylon the Great here?*

Babylon the Great here is a literal city existing at the time of the tribulation. It is not referring to Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth which symbolizes the vast apostate religious system of Rev 17, as so many in the church believe. They are two distinct entities, as scriptures clearly teach (CP Isa 13:1-6, 11-13, 19-22; 47:1-5; Jer 51:5-9 with Rev 14:8; 16:17-21; 18:8-10, 17-19). These scriptures all refer to Babylon as a literal city. In the Old Testament its destruction is prophesied in the "day of the Lord". This day has not come yet - it begins at the outpouring of God's judgment upon the earth recorded in Rev 6:12 (CP Rev 6:12-17). Babylon will be destroyed by the great earthquake and fire under the seventh vial judgment at the end of the tribulation, prior to Christ's second coming (CP Rev 17:1-6, 12-17). Here we see Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, as the symbol of a vast apostate religious system which will be destroyed by the ten kings of the ten future kingdoms in the middle of the tribulation. Clearly scriptures prove that Babylon refers to two distinct entities (see also comments on Rev 17:1-6, 17:7-17 and 17:18).

Babylon the city does not presently exist in the form attributed to it in Rev 18. However, there is no doubt whatever that God's word will be fulfilled, therefore it will be rebuilt before it is destroyed again, according to scripture (CP Zech 5:5-11). Here we see the future rebuilding of Babylon prophesied by Zechariah - "wickedness" will be built a house in Shinar. *Shinar* is the land in which Babylon is situated (CP Gen

10:10). The wind in the women's wings, and having wings like the wings of a stork, in Zech 5:9-11, symbolizes the speed with which Babylon will be rebuilt and restored to its former glory. At the time of preparing this study Babylon has been partly rebuilt where it previously stood in the land, once part of Assyria, that is now modern Iraq. Antichrist will rise up from Assyria, and Babylon will be his seat of government (CP Isa 10:27; 14:24-27; 30:27-31; 31:4-9; Dan 11:36-45; Mic 5:3-6 with Isa 14:3-6 and Rev 17:18). It is not without significance that Babylon was the scene of the first great apostasy against God when Nimrod built the Tower of Babel (CP Gen 10:8-10; 11:1-9). Babylon will also be the scene of the last great apostasy which will result in its complete and utter destruction. It will be cast down forever, never to be built again (CP Jer 51:24-26, 37-49, 59-64 with Rev 18:21-23).

18:24 *Does this mean that Babylon the city is responsible for the death of every saint and prophet slain on the earth throughout history?*

No, it means that the religious, commercial, and political systems embodied in Babylon will be guilty of the blood of God's people (CP Rev 6:9-10; 11:3-10; 13:7-17; 14:9-11; 17:6; 19:2). See also comments on Rev 17:18.

19:1-5 *Who is the great whore referred to here?*

The great whore referred to here is Babylon the literal city. All nations have drunk of the wine of her fornications, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her also (CP Rev 18:1-3 (see also comments on Rev 17:18 and 18:1-3)). The rejoicing in heaven over the fall of Babylon in Rev 19:1 is in response to the command to heaven to rejoice in 18:20 (CP 18:20 with 19:1). Many in the church believe the great whore referred to in Rev 19:2 is Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, of Rev 17, but that is incorrect because that great whore, who symbolizes an apostate religious system, will be destroyed by men, not by God (CP Rev 17:12-17). An apostate religious system cannot be destroyed by an earthquake and fire, like a literal city. "... and her smoke rose up for ever and ever" applies to the city, not the apostate religious system (CP Isa 13:19-22; Jer 51:5-8, 25-26; Rev 14:8; 18:5, 8-9, 17-19; 19:3). Furthermore, as we learned in our study on Rev 17:7-17, the apostate religious system, symbolized by Babylon the great whore, will be destroyed by the ten kings in the middle of the tribulation, while the destruction of Babylon the literal city, will occur under the seventh vial judgment at the end of the tribulation, just prior to Christ's second coming and the battle of Armageddon (CP Rev 16:17-19). See also comments on Rev 17:1-6 and 17:7-17.

19:7-9 *Is the church the lamb's wife or bride of Christ as so many Christians believe?*

No, the lamb's wife, or the bride of Christ, is clearly identified in scripture as New Jerusalem, the city of God, which is also called "the mother of us all" (CP

Ga 4:25-26 with Rev 21:2, 9-10). New Jerusalem is the lamb's wife that "hath made herself ready" in Rev 19:7, and was "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" in 21:2. She will be adorned with the jewels of 21:18-21 (CP Rev 21:18-21). It is granted to her that she should be "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white", which is the righteousness of saints, because she will be the eternal home of all the saints of God - Old Testament and New Testament alike - from Abel to the very last soul saved in the tribulation (CP Rev 19:8 with Isa 2:1-3 (also Mic 4:1-3); Jn 14:1-3; He 11:1-2, 13-16; 12:22-23; Rev 3:12; 14:1-5; 15:2-3; 20:4-6; 21:24-27; 22:1-5). For a more detailed study on the bride of Christ see comments on Rev 21:2. See also comments on 2Cor 11:2, Eph 2:15-16 (B), 4:13 and 5:25-32.

19:9 *Will the marriage supper of the lamb be a literal meal or is it symbolic?*

Opinions are divided among bible scholars as to whether this meal will be literal or symbolic. Those who believe it will be a literal meal claim that it will be eaten in heaven because all the saints of God are in heaven at the time it was stated that the marriage of the lamb had come, and his wife had made herself ready (CP V7). Those subscribing to this view believe that the supper will take place sometime before the saints return to earth with Jesus at His second advent, for the battle of Armageddon (CP V11-21 with Jude 14-15).

Others believe that the marriage supper of the lamb is symbolic; that it refers to the fellowship of eternal blessedness foreshadowed by the Lord's supper, rather than a literal meal. Still others believe that it illustrates the restoration of God's intimacy with His people through the analogy of a bride and bridegroom. Others yet believe that it is a symbolic meal and will take place at the establishment of the millennial reign of Christ, and will last throughout the thousand years period. There are no scriptures of course to support any of these views. Those who espouse the view that the supper is symbolic all teach that the church is the bride of Christ. Believers should not spend too much time speculating on whether the marriage supper of the lamb is literal or symbolic. It is more blessed to be among those called to the supper.

19:10 *What does it mean that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy?*

This means that the gospel of Jesus is prophetic. The gospel is the testimony of Jesus (CP Rev 22:7). The gospel testifies of Jesus. It makes known to all who hear it the redemptive work of Christ, His coming again and the final judgment of God upon the earth and all its inhabitants (CP Rev 1:1-3; 22:7). Holy scriptures - the bible - reveals God's will through His word and His works, as well as reveal God's plans and predictions, which are all centred around Jesus (CP Lu 24:27; Jn 5:39; 1Pe 1:10-12; 2Pe 1:19-21 with 1Jn 5:10).

19:11-21 *What is portrayed here?*

This portrays the second coming of Christ with all the angels of heaven and saints of God, for the battle of Armageddon. This is the fulfilment of many Old Testament prophecies (CP Isa 10:20-27; 11:4; 13:6-16; 14:4-6, 9-11, 16-20, 24-27; 30:30-33 (tophet means a great funeral pyre); 34:1-17; 63:1-6; Jer 30:1-11; Eze 38:1-3, 17 - 39:7; Joel 3:1-2, 9-16; Mic 5:1-15; Zech 14:1-7, 12-15 with 2Th 1:7-10; Rev 19:19-21). In the context of the prophecy in Eze 38 and 39, *Gog* represents Antichrist, and *Magog*, the nation he rules - Assyria. Antichrist is the king of the north - Assyria. He is called *the Assyrian* in scripture, and also the *king of Babylon* (that part of Old Testament Syria where Babylon is located, is now modern day Iraq (CP Isa 10:24; 14:4, 25; 30:31; 31:8; Dan 11:40; Mic 5:5-6)). In Rev 20:8 *Gog* and *Magog* describe hostile nations aligned with Satan in the last great rebellion against God at the end of Christ's millennial reign on earth (CP 20:8 (see also comments on Rev 20:1-3)).

We learn from Zech 14 that at Christ's second coming he will return to the Mount of Olives from which He ascended to heaven at His first advent (CP Lu 24:50-51; Ac 1:9-12). The Mount of Olives will split in two and create a great valley, into which the remaining half of Israel will flee for protection from Antichrist's armies, and the outpouring of God's wrath upon the earth (CP Zech 14:1-5). We also learn from Isa 63 that although all the angels of heaven and saints of God accompany Jesus to the battle of Armageddon, they do not fight the battle with Him. Jesus single-handedly defeats Antichrist and his armies, together with Satan and the false prophet (CP Isa 59:15-16; 63:1-6; Rev 19:15, 19-21). The battle of Armageddon will last only one day (CP Isa 30:26; Zech 14:6-7). Only one sixth of Antichrist's forces will be spared (CP Eze 39:1-7). The blood that is shed will flow for a distance of two hundred miles, or approximately 320 kilometres, at a depth of 1.2 metres "... up to the horses bridles" (CP Rev 14:19-20). It will take seven years to burn the weapons of war as firewood (CP Eze 39:8-10). It will take the whole of Israel seven months to bury those killed in the battle notwithstanding that the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field will also eat the dead bodies (CP Rev 19:17-18 with Eze 39:11-20). Antichrist's forces will not only die by Christ's hand. They will also die from a plague sent by God that will eat away their flesh, and they will slay each other as well (CP Zech 14:12-13; Eze 38:21). See also comments on Mt 24:1-3; Jn 5:43; Rev 6:1-2, 13:1-7, 14:14-16, 16:16.

20:1-3 *How are we to understand this?*

After Christ defeats Antichrist and his armies at Armageddon, Satan is cast into the bottomless pit, a prison of demon spirits, for a thousand years - during Christ's millennial reign. At the end of the thousand years he will be loosed from the pit for a short while and will deceive nations hostile to God into joining him in the last great rebellion against God (CP Rev 20:7-10). *Gog* and *Magog* here describe those hostile nations. They will besiege Jerusalem and attack Christ's faithful ones. God will send fire down from heaven and destroy them. Satan will then be cast into the lake of fire where Antichrist and the false prophet

are, to be tormented day and night forever (CP Rev 14:10-11; 20:11-15).

20:4-6 *Is the thousand year reign of Christ with the resurrected saints referred to here literal or symbolic?*

The millennial or thousand year reign of Christ with the resurrected saints is clearly literal because it has to do with God's eternal kingdom on earth being established by Christ in fulfilment of prophecy, after Christ defeats Antichrist and his armies at the battle of Armageddon (CP Dan 2:44-45; 7:13-14, 23-27; Zech 14:1-9; Eph 1:10; Rev 5:8-10). The millennial reign of Christ only applies to the first thousand years of God's earthly kingdom. It is an everlasting kingdom and Christ and God together will reign over it for eternity. The express purpose of the first thousand years is to rid the earth of all enemies of God and rebellion against Him. This will be accomplished when the last great rebellion against God is put down at the end of the thousand years. Nations hostile to God will be destroyed, Satan cast into the lake of fire, and the wicked dead judged, and also cast into the lake of fire at the great white throne judgment. Christ will then hand the kingdom over to God (CP Rev 20:7-15; with 1Cor 15:24-28). *He that hath part in the first resurrection* in Rev 20:6 refers to all the saints of God, Old Testament and New Testament alike, from Abel until the very last soul saved in the tribulation (CP Ro 3:21-26; He 9:13-15; 2Jn 2:2).. They will all have part in the first resurrection and reign with Christ for the thousand years (CP Jn 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:20-23, 51-58; 1 Th 4:13-18; Rev 20:4).

Some in the church do not believe that Christ will reign over a literal earthly kingdom during the thousand years. They believe that the earth will be desolate in that period, and that the earth itself is the bottomless pit where Satan will be bound for the thousand years. This of course contradicts the clear teaching of scripture. The earth will not be desolate, for the millennial reign of Christ will be "*the times of restitution of all things*", spoken of by Peter in Ac 3 (CP Ac 3:19-21). *The restitution of all things* means that in the thousand year reign of Christ all things will be completely restored to what God intended them to be before Adam fell. The earth will be delivered from the curse under which it now exists because of Adam's sin (CP Gen 3:17-18 with Ro 8:19-21). In Ro 8:19-21 Paul is teaching that the whole creation - all nature - comprising both the animate and inanimate world, is waiting for the glorification of the saints, so it too may be delivered from the curse. The saints will be glorified when they go to heaven with Jesus in the first resurrection (CP Ro 8:28-30; 1Cor 15:42-44; Col 3:4). In the eternal kingdom, the earth will be restored to normal fertility and productivity; there will be no more famines in the land; fruitful seasons shall be without interruptions; waste places will be restored to usefulness; deserts will blossom again (CP Isa 4:1-2; 30:23-25; 32:15; 35:1-2, 7; 41:17-19; 43:19-20; 49:8-11; 51:3; 55:12-13; 61:4-5; Eze 34:23-31; 36:8-12, 29-30, 33-38; 47:1-12; Joel 2:18-19, 21-27; 3:18; Amos 9:11-15; Zech 8:12; 14:8; Rev 7:16-17).

There will be no more sin and sickness in the earth (CP Isa 33:20, 24; 35:3-6; 53:5; 1Pe 2:24; Rev 22:1-5). World wide peace will prevail in the earth (CP Isa 2:1-4 (Mic 4:1-3); 9:6-7; 11:10; 19:23; 26:12; 32:18; 54:14; 57:19; 60:18; 66:12; Zech 14:9-11). There will be no more poverty; material blessings will fill the earth; prosperity will be for all (CP Isa 60:5-17; 62:8-9; 65:21-23; Mic 4:4; Zech 3:10). Formerly wild animals will be tame; children will play with once poisonous snakes (CP Isa 11:6-9; Eze 34:25, 28). There will be no more sorrow or mourning; no more weeping and crying; pain will no longer exist (CP Isa 35:10; 53:4; 60:20; 65:18-19; Rev 7:17; 21:4). The righteous will no longer die (CP Isa 25:8; 1Cor 15:52-57; Rev 21:4). Death will continue during the millennium but only for those who commit sins worthy of death; infant mortality and premature death will no longer exist. A hundred year old man will still be considered a child, and only sinners will die that young (CP Isa 65:20-22). The lifespan of humans will be extended throughout the millennium, and if they do not rebel with Satan at the end of the thousand years they will continue to live eternally in the new earth (CP Mt 25:46; 1Cor 15:23-28; Eph 1:10; 2:7; Rev 20:7-15; Rev 21:4). And last, but not least, animals will no longer attack and kill humans, or each other (CP Isa 65:25).

It is ludicrous in light of all these scriptures to teach that the earth will be desolate in Christ's millennial reign, and that the earth itself is the bottomless pit where Satan will be bound for the thousand years. (For a detailed study on the bottomless pit see comments on Rev 9:1-2). See also comments on Ac 3:19-21, Ro 8:19-21, 1Cor 15:24-28.

20:11 *What does it mean here that heaven and earth fled away from Christ's face and there was found no place for them?*

Opinions are divided among bible commentators as to what this means exactly. Some hold that it means that the present heaven and earth at that time will be literally destroyed according to scripture and will cease to exist (CP Isa 34:4; 51:6; He 1:10-11; 2Pe 3:7, 10-12). Those scriptures do not mean that the present heaven and earth will be literally destroyed and cease to exist, otherwise the following scriptures are meaningless (CP Psa 78:69; 89:2, 28-29, 34; 104:5; 119:89-91; Ecc 1:4). The clear teaching in all these scriptures is that the present heaven and earth will always exist; they are eternal.

To properly understand Rev 20:11 we need to carefully examine 2Pe 3:7, 10-12 (CP 2Pe 3:7, 10-12). We learn in V7 that contemporaneous with the great white throne judgment "... against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men", heaven will pass away, the elements will melt with fervent heat, and earth and the works it contains will be burnt up. They will all be "dissolved". *Dissolve* means to loose, loosen, unbind that which is bound; to dissolve something coherent into parts; to destroy. In the context of 2Pe 3:7, 10-12, it means that heaven and earth will be loosed from their present corrupt state into a new state. They will be purified by fire and made new as to character (CP Isa 65:17; 66:22; He

1:12; 12:27-28; 2 Pe 3:13 with Rev 21:1). The word *new* in 2 Pe 3:13 and Rev 21:1 used to describe heaven and earth is from the Greek word **kainos**. It does not mean new in existence, but new in freshness and character (CP 2Cor 5:17; Rev 21:5). Heaven and earth as we know them will be renewed, not destroyed.

Fled away in Rev 20:11 means to flee, to shun, to vanish. It is used here of the flight of physical matter. *There was found no place for them* simply means that there is no place for them in God's eternal kingdom in their present corrupt state. *Elements* in 2Pe 3:10 refers to the substance of the material world. *The works that are therein* include all man-made things that are in bondage to corruption (CP Ro 8:19-21 (see also comments on Ro 8:19-21)). See also comments on 2 Pe 3:1-7.

20:11-15 *How are we to understand the great white throne judgment and the lake of fire?*

The great white throne judgment and the lake of fire signifies the end of Christ's millennial reign pursuant to Him handing over the kingdom to God (CP 1 Cor 15:23-28). The great white throne judgment is when all the ungodly, from the beginning of time to those killed by fire from God at the end of the thousand years, in the last great rebellion led by Satan, are cast into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the final destiny of the wicked - a place of torment, into which Satan and all the fallen angels, Antichrist and the false prophet, and everyone whose names are not in the book of life will be cast at the end of Christ's millennial reign (CP Rev 14:9-11; 19:20; 20:7-10; 21:7-8). Those not found written in the book of life who will be cast into the lake of fire include the tares and the nations condemned by Christ for their failure to extend mercy to the Jewish believers during the tribulation (CP Mt 13:24-30; 25:34-40 with 41-46 (see also comments on Mt 13:24-30 and 25:31-46)). See also comments on Rev 14:9-11.

21:1 *What does it mean "and there was no more sea"?*

The general consensus among bible commentators is that this means that there will be no more large oceans, which presently cover about three quarters of the earth's surface. But there will be some seas, as well as river systems and lakes, as scriptures clearly teach (CP Psa 72:8; Jer 5:22; 31:35-36; Zech 9:10; 14:8).

21:2 *What do we learn from New Jerusalem here "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband"?*

(CP also Rev 19:7-8; 21:9-10). These scriptures clearly identify New Jerusalem as the bride of Christ. New Jerusalem is the "lamb's wife" that made herself ready in Rev 19:7 and was "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" in 21:2. She will be adorned with the jewels of V18-21 (CP Rev 21:18-21). It is granted to her that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints in Rev 19:8 because she will be the eternal

home of the saints - Old Testament and New Testament alike - from Abel to the very last soul saved in the tribulation (CP Rev 21:24-27). New Jerusalem is the city of God which God promised to the Old Testament saints, and Jesus promised to the New Testament saints. They will all live in New Jerusalem together (CP He 11:1-2, 13-16 with Isa 2:1-4 (also Mic 4:1-3) Jn 14:1-3; He 12:22-23; 13:14; Rev 3:12; 14:1-5; 15:2-4; 20:4-6; 22:1-5). There is no suggestion whatever in any of these scriptures that New Jerusalem symbolizes the church, as many Christians believe. It is clearly a literal city that is referred to as the bride of Christ in Rev 19:7-8 and 21:2, 9-10 and we should accept that teaching at face value, not look for hidden meanings.

Despite the clarity of John's revelation of New Jerusalem in Rev 19:7-8 and 21:2, 9-10 being the bride of Christ, a teaching persists in the church that the church itself is the bride (CP 2Cor 11:2). This is one of the scriptures which it is claimed teaches that the church is the bride of Christ. But it does not teach that at all. Paul is simply addressing his converts in Corinth here telling them that he is anxious for them with the deep concern of God Himself - anxious that their love should be for Christ alone, just as a virgin saves her love for one man only; for the one who will be her husband. But Paul feared that in some way, just as Eve was deceived by Satan in the Garden of Eden, the Corinthian Christians would be led astray from their simple love and devotion for Christ (CP V2-4). When kept in its proper perspective it soon becomes clear that V2 is not alluding to the church as the bride of Christ at all. Furthermore, Paul is only addressing his own converts in Corinth, not the whole church, which extends far beyond Corinth in the earth. It is not Paul's job to present the whole church to Christ anyway, only his own converts. Every Christian will have rejoicing in their own converts (CP Dan 12:3; 1Cor 3:11-14; 2Cor 1:14; Php 4:1; 1Th 2:19-20).

Another scripture also used as a proof text that the church is the bride of Christ is Eph 5:25-32. But again that also is not correct, as this study clearly proves (CP Eph 5:25-32). Paul is simply illustrating here Christ's infinite love for the church by comparing the relationship of Christ and the church, to that of a man and his wife. The supreme responsibility of husbands in regard to their wives is to love them with the same unreserved, selfless and sacrificial love that Christ has for His church. Christ gave everything He had, including His own life, for the church, and that is the standard of sacrificial love a husband must have for his wife (CP V33; Col 3:19; 1Pe 3:7 with Ac 20:28). Paul is not teaching in Eph 5:25-32 that the wife symbolizes the church, or that the husband symbolizes Christ. He is simply teaching that Christ's relationship to the church is more easily understood through the dynamics of a marriage relationship between a husband and wife (CP Eph 5:22-23). The *great mystery* Paul refers to in V 32 is that marriage is a sacred reflection of the magnificent and beautiful mystery of union between Christ and the church, which was completely unknown until revealed in the New Testament. Let us read the complete passage now from V 22 (CP V 22-32). Other scriptures also used to teach that the church is the bride of Christ are

Isa 62:5 and Ro 7:4, but it is soon apparent upon examining them that they do not teach this either (CP Isa 62:5; Ro 7:4). See also comments on Ro 7:4; 2 Cor 11:2, Eph 2:15-16(B), 5:25-32, Rev 19:7-9.

We should note here before closing this study that New Jerusalem is not called *new* because it is new in existence - it has always existed in heaven - but to distinguish between it and earthly Jerusalem. It is called the *Father's house* (CP Jn 14:1-3); *the mother of us all* (allegorically the progenitor - mother - of all Christians, further confirming her status as the bride of Christ (CP Ga 4:25-26)); *the heavenly Jerusalem* (CP He 12:22); *the tabernacle of God* (CP Rev 13:6; 15:5; 21:3); *the beloved city* (CP Rev 20:9); *the bride, the lamb's wife* (CP Rev 21:2, 9); *the holy Jerusalem* (CP Rev 21:10); *the holy city* (CP Rev 21:2; 22:19). New Jerusalem will be moved from heaven to earth after the great white throne judgment to be among men forever as the capital of God in the earth (CP Rev 21:1-7, 24-27). See also comments on Rev 20:11.

21:3-8 *Who is speaking here and what do we learn from what they say?*

There are two speakers here - "a great voice out of heaven" - God, in V3, and "He that sat upon the throne" - Jesus, in V5. Jesus is the *alpha* and *omega* of V6 (CP Rev 1:4-8, 11, 17; 2:8; 3:14; 22:13-16 (See also comments on Rev 1:8)). The tabernacle of God that is with men in Rev 21:3, is God's temple in the New Jerusalem. That John said he saw no temple in V22 simply means that there is no temple or shrine in New Jerusalem as an object of worship. Both God and Jesus will be the objects of worship (CP V22). Scriptures clearly teach that God's temple is in New Jerusalem; it is His throne forever (CP Isa 2:2-3; Eze 37:26-28; 43:1-7; Joel 3:17; Hag 2:6-9 with Rev 3:12; 7:15; 11:19; 15:5-8; 16:1, 17). God will live visibly among men in the New Jerusalem (CP Lev 26:11-12; Psa 68:15-18; Isa 33:17; Zech 2:10-11; 8:3; Mt 5:8; 1ev 7:15; 22:3-5). New Jerusalem will be the capital of God in the new earth.

The *fearful* in Rev 21:8 who will be cast into the lake of fire, are professing Christians whose fear of man overrides their loyalty to Christ and the truth of His word. Their personal feelings and status among men means more to them than proclaiming God's word and witnessing to His saving grace. *Fearful* means to be timid, afraid, faint-hearted. Jesus placed them first among those consigned to the lake of fire because they profess to be Christians, but they compromise His word, rather than proclaim it (CP Psa 119:46; Mt 10:32-33; 13:20-21; Mk 8:34-38; Ro 10:8-10; 2 Ti 2:12; Rev 3:5).

21:12-18 *How are we to understand what John says here?*

We understand from this that New Jerusalem is a literal city measuring fifteen hundred miles - twelve thousand furlongs - long, fifteen hundred miles wide, and fifteen hundred miles high. It has more than enough room for every saint of God, from Abel to the very last soul saved in the tribulation, who will inhabit it (CP V24). The city is made of pure gold, which is

transparent, like clear glass. The streets are also made of pure gold, transparent like clear glass. A wall, over two hundred feet - one hundred and forty-four cubits - high, with twelve gates, each one a pearl, surrounds the city (CP V21).

21:23-25 *Does this mean that there will be no sun and moon in eternity?*

No, John is referring to New Jerusalem here, not the new heaven and earth. New Jerusalem has no need of the sun and moon for God's glory is greater than the sun and moon. It will radiate throughout the city and there will be no night there (CP V25; 22:5 with Isa 60:19-20). The sun and the moon will shine on the rest of the earth though. Scriptures teach that they will shine forever; day and night will never cease on earth (CP Gen 8:22; Psa 148:3-6; Isa 66:22-23; Jer 31:35-36; 33:20-21, 25-26). The gates of New Jerusalem will never be shut because it will always be light there from God's radiating glory, and Christ, it's light. (City gates were only shut at night for securing the city after dark. There is no need to do this in New Jerusalem because there will never be any darkness there.)

22:1-2 *How are we to understand the river of water of life and the tree of life here?*

The river of water of life is not called that because it will be the medium of eternal life, but because it will bring life to everything along its course (CP Eze 47:1-12; Zech 14:8). The river will flow into both the Mediterranean and the Dead Seas - the *former sea*, and the *hinder sea* of Zech 14:8. It will give life to the Dead Sea, which has no fish in it. At present it cannot sustain any organic life, but at that time, it will be teeming with fish (CP Eze 47:9-10). The river will be over two miles wide. (It measures four thousand cubits from one side to the nearest edge of the deepest part in the middle, and it will undoubtedly measure the same distance from the other side. This makes a total of eight thousand cubits, or approximately twelve thousand feet, which is in excess of two miles (CP Eze 47:3-5)). It should be noted here that, contrary to what some Christians believe, the varying depths of the river have no spiritual significance. Clearly the river of water of life is literal, not symbolic of the blessings of God or the continual flow of eternal life from God's throne, as some teach (CP Psa 46:4).

The tree of life is also literal. It will bear twelve kinds of fruit; a different fruit for each month of the year. It will be such a prolific bearer, the fruit will never be all used up (CP Eze 47:7, 12; Rev 22:2). The fruit will be for both the redeemed of God, who will live in New Jerusalem, and the natural people, who will live in the new earth (CP Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14). The leaves of the tree will be for the preservation of life of the natural people. The new earth will be inhabited throughout eternity by natural people - and their future generations - who lived on the earth after the battle of Armageddon, during the millennial reign of Christ and did not rebel with Satan at the end of the thousand years (CP Psa 37:9-11, 22, 29, 34; 69:35-36; Isa 2:1-3; 65:18-25; 66:22-23; Dan 7:13-14, 27; Mic 4:1-5; Zech 14:16; Mt 25:31-46; Rev 11:15). These

scriptures are merely representative of countless scriptures which teach that there will be eternal generations of natural people in the new earth. They will marry and have children, build houses, plant crops, go to work, and live normal everyday lives. And most important of all, they will all worship God (CP Zech 14:16 with Rev 21:24-27; 22:14).

22:4 *What do we learn from this?*

We learn from this that (1), God will live visibly among the saints forever in New Jerusalem, ... *and they shall see His face* (CP Lev 26:11-12; Psa 68:15-18; Isa 33:17; Zech 2:10-11; 8:3; Mt 5:8; 1Jn 3:2; Rev 7:15). Previously, no one could look upon God and live (CP Ex 33:20-23; Jn 1:18; 1Ti 6:16). And (2) ... *His name shall be in their foreheads*, means that the redeemed of God are his personal possession (CP Rev 3:12 with 7:2-3 and 14:1).

22:5 *See comments on Rev 21:23-25.*

22:6 *See comments on Rev 1:19.*

22:7 *Who is speaking here?*

Jesus Himself speaks here and repeats the blessing pronounced in chapter 1 upon all who conform to the truths of this prophecy (CP Rev 22:12-16, 20; Mt 24:29-31 with Rev 1:1-3). We also learn in Rev 22:7 that Christians are not in error who believe that Christ's return is imminent. Jesus' words, *behold, I come quickly*, here and V 12 and 20, indicate that He could come at any time. Christians are commanded in scripture to order their lives in anticipation of His coming in their lifetime (CP V12, 20 with Php 3:20; 4:5; Col 3:1-6; 1Th 3:12-13; 2Th 3:5; Tit 2:11-15; Jas 5:7-9; 1Jn 2:28; 3:1-3). Paul, James and John here all lived in anticipation of Christ returning in their lifetime, and they communicated that anticipation to others. We must do the same (CP Rev 22:10). This teaches that the contents of the book of Revelation must be proclaimed to every Christian to produce obedience and worship. *The time is at hand* indicates the imminence of Christ's return. When He does come again salvation will no longer be available to those who have heard the gospel and rejected it (CP Rev 22:11-16 with 2 Th 2:7-12).

22:10-12 *What do we learn from what is said here?*

V12 here refers to the rapture, and highlights the impending doom that awaits the unbelievers and reprobates of V 11. What a man is when Jesus comes back to rapture the church to heaven, is what he will be like in all eternity (CP 2Th 2:7-12). This teaches that after the church is raptured to heaven, salvation will no longer be available to those still living on earth who have heard the gospel and rejected it. They will be lost for eternity if they do not repent and commit their way to Jesus while the church is still on earth. *Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand* in Rev 22:10 indicates the imminence of Christ's return and underlines the necessity for believers to hear and obey the teachings

of Revelation. (See also comments on 2Th 2:6-8 and 2:9-12).

22:15 *What does the term "dogs" mean here?*

The term *dogs* is used metaphorically in scripture of homosexuals (CP De 23:17-18), false prophets (CP Isa 56:10-12), unclean Gentiles (CP Mt 15:22-27) and Judaizers (CP Php 3:2). None of these will enter into eternity with Christ.

22:17 *How are we to understand this?*

The general consensus among bible commentators, based on the premise that the church is the bride of Christ, is that the Holy Spirit and the church are inviting all unsaved peoples here to partake of the salvation - *the water of life* - in Christ. However, the bible does not teach that the church is the bride, but

rather, New Jerusalem is. Therefore, it is New Jerusalem, allegorically the progenitor of all Christians ... *the mother of us all*, that is referred to here, not the church (CP Ga 4:26; Rev 19:7-8; 21:2, 9-10). For more detailed studies on the bride of Christ see comments on Ro 7:4, 2 Cor 11:2, Eph 2:15-16 (B), 4:13, 5:25-32, Rev 19:7-9, 21:2.

22:18-19 *Does the curse John pronounces here apply to the book of Revelation or to the bible as a whole?*

It applies to the book of Revelation. However, no part of God's word can be added to or taken away from (CP De 4:2; 12:32). This does not apply to differences of interpretation of scripture, but to the deliberate altering and the substitution of scripture to suit teaching agendas that deviate from foundational truth.

A Chronology of Events in Revelation

1. **Pre-tribulation rapture.** This forms part of the first resurrection when the church and all the saints of God - Old Testament and New Testament alike - will be raptured to heaven by Jesus, prior to the tribulation (see comments on Rev 1:19, 3:7-13).

2. **Opening of the seven seals.** The first seal reveals Antichrist making war on the nations prior to entering into a seven year peace treaty with Israel (see comments on Rev 6:1-2, 13:1-7). The second seal reveals Antichrist breaking the treaty after three and a half years - in the middle of the tribulation - and making war on God's people, under the empowering of Satan (see comments on Rev 6:1-2, 11:1-2, 12:1-5, 12:6, 13:1-7). The third seal reveals famine in the earth. This is a natural consequence of Antichrist's wars (see comments on Rev 6:5-6). The fourth seal reveals death and hell which together with war and famine kills a quarter of earth's *inhabitants* (see comments on Rev 6:7-8). The fifth seal reveals the first martyrs of the tribulation, beheaded for their witness to Christ (see comments on Rev 6:9-11). The sixth seal reveals the first of God's judgments upon sinners (see comments on Rev 6:12-17). The seventh seal reveals the seven trumpet judgments of God about to be unleashed upon the *earth* (see comments on Rev 8:1-6).

3. **The hundred and forty-four thousand Jews sealed.** They are sealed with a seal of God in their foreheads to protect them from the seven trumpet judgments to follow that will continue throughout the first half of the *tribulation* (see comments on Rev 7:1-8).

4. **The seven trumpet judgments.** First trumpet judgment: hail and fire mingled with blood which burns up a third part of the trees and all green grass (see comments on Rev 8:1-6). Second trumpet

judgment: a flaming meteorite cast into the sea which will turn a third part into blood, contaminating the sea and killing a third of all the sea creatures, and destroying a third of the ships (see comments on Rev 8:1-6). Third trumpet judgment: a great star called "wormwood" falls to earth and poisons a third of earth's drinking water causing many to die (see comments on Rev 8:1-6). Fourth trumpet judgment: a third part of the sun and moon and stars smitten, which affects day and night (see comments on Rev 8:1-6). Fifth trumpet judgment: the first of three woes - men tormented for five months by demon locusts (see comments on Rev 8:13, 9:1-2). Sixth trumpet judgment: second woe - two hundred million demon horsemen from the bottomless pit kill one third of the world's inhabitants (see comments on Rev 9:13-21). Seventh trumpet judgment: third woe - casting down of Satan from heaven to earth in the middle of the tribulation. Satan causes Antichrist to break his seven year peace treaty with Israel and make war on God's people (see comments on Rev 11:14-19, 12:1-5, 12:6).

5. **Abomination of Desolation.** With the help of the false prophet Antichrist sets up an image of himself as God - the abomination of desolation - in the temple and kills all who will not worship it (see comments on Rev 11:1-2, 12:6).

6. **The hundred and forty-four thousand Jews represented by the manchild raptured to heaven.** This also happens in the middle of the tribulation (see comments on Rev 7:1-8, 12:1-5).

7. **Babylon the great, the mother of harlots.** This vast apostate religious system in league with Antichrist will be destroyed by the ten kings of the ten future kingdoms - over which Antichrist will rule - in

the middle of the tribulation (*see comments on Rev 13:1-7, 17:1-6, 17:7-17*).

8. **Seven last plagues.** These complete God's wrath poured out upon the earth during the second half of the tribulation prior to Christ's second coming and the battle of Armageddon. They are the last plagues emanating from the seventh trumpet judgment which will complete the seventh seal and draw the tribulation to a close (*see comments on Rev 8:1-6, 15:1*). The seven last plagues are contained in the seven vial, or bowl judgments. First plague: ulcers, boils. These will only fall on those in the earth who have taken the mark of the beast. Second plague: sea will turn to blood and every living thing in it will die. Third plague: rivers and streams turn to blood - no fresh drinking water. Fourth plague: men burnt by scorching heat. Fifth plague: darkness - those allied to Antichrist will be enveloped in impenetrable darkness causing them to gnaw their tongues in pain. Sixth plague: River Euphrates dries up, enabling other armies to join with Antichrist at Armageddon. Seventh plague: the most powerful and devastating earthquake in the history of the world. It will split Jerusalem into three parts, destroy Babylon the literal city, and alter the earth's topography. Hailstones, each weighing about forty kilograms will rain down upon the earth killing all who they hit (*see comments on Rev 16:1*).

9. **God's two witnesses killed.** The beast out of the bottomless pit kills God's two witnesses at the end of the tribulation. God translates them to heaven (*see comments on 11:3-6, 17:7-17*).

10. **Second coming of Christ - the battle of Armageddon.** Christ defeats armies of Antichrist. Antichrist and false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever. Satan is bound with a great chain and cast into the bottomless pit where he will remain for a thousand years - during

Christ's millennial reign - after which he will be loosed for a time to deceive the nations again before being cast into the lake of fire (*see comments on Rev 16:1, 16:16, 19:11-21, 20:1-3*).

11. **Millennial - thousand years - reign of Christ.** Christ establishes God's eternal kingdom on earth. Christ reigns over the kingdom for a thousand years and then hands it over to God. They reign over it together from then on (*see comments on Rev 20:4-6, 20:11*).

12. **Great white throne judgment and the lake of fire.** This signifies the end of Christ's millennial reign. All the ungodly who ever lived are judged here and cast into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the final destiny of the wicked which includes Antichrist, the false prophet, Satan and all whose names are not written in the book of life. This also includes the tares and the nations condemned by Christ for failing the Jewish believers during the tribulation (*see comments on Rev 14:9-11, 20:4-6, 20:11-15*).

13. **New heaven and new earth.** Contemporaneous with the great white throne judgment, the present heaven and earth will be made new by God. They will be purified by fire and loosed from their present corrupt state (*see comments on Rev 20:11, 21:1*).

14. **Bride of Christ revealed:** New Jerusalem. New Jerusalem, "the lamb's wife", comes down from God out of heaven, "adorned as a bride for her husband". New Jerusalem will be the capital of God in the new earth. It does not symbolize the church as many believe, but is a literal city fifteen hundred miles long, wide and high, with a wall over two hundred feet high surrounding it. It will be the eternal home of all the saints of God, from Abel to the very last soul saved in the tribulation. They will all live in New Jerusalem together (*see comments on Rev 19:7-9, 21:2, 21:12-18*).